

GUARANTEED PRELIMS SELECTION OR GET 100% FEE BACK

Read Only 10-Red Books & Nothing Else

WITH TOPIC-WISE & DAY-WISE GUIDED ACTION PLAN (GAP)
with GAP, you will be able to read these **Red Books** atleast Thrice..

Only English Medium

- We guarantee you Min 70 Qs or 20% more than cut off! in GS Prelims 2021 from our 10 RED BOOKS Else your 100% Fee will be back.
- 3 out of every 4 Qs IN UPSC QS Pre came from our RED BOOKS Since 2008

See Proof:
www.crackias.com/proof

10 Red Books cover

- All Old & New NCERTs and 70+ Major Books Covered.
- 100 % Coverage of Current Affairs (Jan 2020-May 2021) Covering 14 sources- PIB, Hindu, HT, Mint, PRS, IE, UNO sites etc.
- Synopsis of India Year Book & Eco Survey 2021.

10000/-


SAVE MORE WITH PT TOPPERS' PACK

- 10 Red Books + Video Lectures +
- GS Pre Test Series: 25 Tests +
- Practice Online Last 40 Years UPSC QS (1978-2019): Topic wise

13700/-

OUR RECORD

Year of Exam	Cut-off Marks for General Category	Data from UPSC website	MARKS DELIVERED FROM OUR 10 RED BOOKLETS
2020	98 (Expected)	154	144
2019	98	154	154
2018	98	154	154
2017	105.34	154	154
2016	116	152	152
2015	107.34	168	168



Arrow Education
Visit us
www.crackias.com
921-7070707
crackiasquery@gmail.com

NEARBY



Delhi court issues arrest warrant for Hafiz Saeed

NEW DELHI
A Delhi court on Saturday issued an arrest warrant for Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba chief and 26/11 Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed in a money laundering case related to terror funding in Jammu and Kashmir.

CITY ► PAGE 3

AAP names candidates for civic body bypolls

NEW DELHI
The Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday announced its candidates for the upcoming by-election in five wards (two in North Delhi Municipal Corporation and three in the East Delhi Municipal Corporation). The bypolls will be held on February 28. The results will be announced on March 3. The last date of filing nominations is February 8.

CITY ► PAGE 3

CLASSIFIEDS ► PAGE 2 & 4
MAGAZINE ► 8 PAGES

Farmers block roads, toll plazas peacefully to protest farm laws

Three-hour *chakka jam* hits Punjab, Haryana most; scattered impact in other States

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The three-hour *chakka jam*, or road blockade protest, called by the protesting farm unions on Saturday went off smoothly, though close to 60 people were detained at a solidarity protest site within Delhi.

There were also reports from some unions of detentions in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Karnataka.

With fears of Republic Day-style chaos and violence looming in the background, security forces stepped up deployment within the national capital, and farm unions called off protests in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

The call for the *chakka jam* was given by the joint front of protesting unions, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, which is trying to keep the movement's momentum



Listen to us: Women participating in large numbers in the *chakka jam* at the Madina toll plaza on National Highway-9 in Rohtak district of Haryana on Saturday. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

alive after almost two-and-a-half months of camping by tens of thousands of farmers on the borders of Delhi. They are demanding a repeal of the three farm reform laws.

"The real struggle has be-

gun after January 26," said Punjab Kisan Union president Ruldu Singh Mansa, addressing a late night press conference at the Singhu border.

"Today's *chakka jam* was

meant to highlight three issues," said Krantikari Kisan Union president Darshan Pal Singh.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 6

MORE REPORTS ► PAGES 2, 5 & 7

NITI Aayog seeks to track impact of green verdicts

Govt. think tank for an 'economically responsible approach'

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The NITI Aayog – the government's apex think tank – has commissioned a study that seeks to examine the "unintended economic consequences" of judicial decisions that have hindered and stalled big-ticket projects on environmental grounds.

A perusal of the document appears to suggest that judgments that negatively impact major infrastructure projects don't adequately consider the economic fallout – in terms of loss of jobs and revenue. Doing so, it reckons, would contribute to public discourse among

SPECIAL

policymakers for promoting an "economically responsible approach by judiciary" in its decisions.

The project brief, a copy of which has been viewed by *The Hindu*, says that it in-

Obstacle course

Some projects/companies which have hit the hurdle

MOPA AIRPORT, GOA
The SC in 2019 suspended environmental clearance but lifted it in Jan. 2020 after imposing several conditions



STERLITE COPPER, THOOTHUKUDI, T.N.
The SC in Dec. rejected a proposal made by Vedanta to operate its closed copper plant. The Madras HC and the T.N. govt. had ordered the closure of the plant



IRON ORE MINING, GOA
In 2018, the SC quashed 88 mining leases for violation of mining procedures and asked the State govt. to issue fresh leases



SAND MINING, UTTAR PRADESH
The National Green Tribunal in 2013 suspended sand mining operations and directed that environmental clearances be obtained from authorities



CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES IN & AROUND DELHI
The NGT imposed a ban on construction activities but specific instances are not known



'A flower for every nail', pledge farmers at Ghazipur

Unions skip *chakka jam* in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand to avert 'attempts to defame movement'

JATIN ANAND
GHAZIPUR

"The government will plant nails and razor wires for us, we will plant flowers for it," said Sukhjeet Singh, a farmer, pointing to a group of men digging a patch of land near the coils of sharp concertina wires placed as part of the several layers of barricading at the Ghazipur border near Delhi.

"We have already planted potatoes and sugarcane in two rows. This is all we know or can do. What they [the government] have done is their job; we farmers will do ours," Mr. Singh said as some of the farmers squatted to plant flowers while others, at a lit-



Peace offering: A farmer offering a sapling to security personnel at the Ghazipur border on Saturday. •SANDEEP SAXENA

tle distance, patted the soil where they had sown vegetables on Saturday afternoon.

As the national *chakka jam* announced by farmers' unions got under way elsewhere, agitating farmers at Ghazipur announced they would give the government

"a flower for every nail" hammered into the roads on Delhi borders to keep the protesters from entering. "We are demanding our rightful due, not asking for something that doesn't belong to us. The government will remember us long after we leave for stand-

ing up to it despite every obstacle it has, and plans to, put in our way," said Manveer Rath, a farmer from Ambala.

Stepped-up security

Security arrangements at the protest site were stepped up on Saturday in view of the *chakka jam*. Razor wire fencing was added to the initial layers of police barricades at road surface level, riot control vehicles and a truck with an iron container were parked to stall a possible vehicular advance towards Delhi on the flyover where the farmers have erected their stage.

Bhartiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait said they

had decided not to observe the *chakka jam* in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand because of inputs that attempts would be made to defame the movement through individuals indulging in violence in the garb of farmers at "at least five locations".

The farmer unions' next agitation, he said, would feature a rally up to the office of the National Green Tribunal, which is "seeking to bestow more profit on corporate houses by banning diesel vehicles – mainly tractors – which are over 10 years old".

Mr. Tikait issued an appeal to farmers across the country to bring a handful of soil to the movement.

PM lauds the judiciary for safeguarding people's rights

SC judge hails Modi as 'popular, vibrant, visionary' leader

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday lauded the judiciary for safeguarding people's rights and personal liberty even during the most challenging times and prioritising national interests whenever the occasion demanded.

Releasing a postage stamp to mark the diamond jubilee of the Gujarat High Court, Mr. Modi said the Supreme Court had conducted the highest number of hearings via videoconference in the world during the pandemic.

"Our judiciary has always interpreted the Constitution positively and creatively to strengthen it further. Be it safeguarding the rights of the people of the country or when any situation arose where national interest needed to be prioritised, the judiciary has always performed its duty," he said.

Online event

Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, Justice M.R. Shah of the Supreme Court, Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court Vikram Nath, Solicitor-General of India Tushar

Mehta were among the attendees at the online event.

Justice Shah, who referred to the Gujarat High Court as his *karnabhoomi*, described the Prime Minister as a "visionary" leader.

"I feel proud and privileged to participate in this function of release of a commemorative stamp of Gujarat High Court, on completion of its 60 years, by our most popular, loved, vibrant and visionary leader, Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 6

Apni Party dents Gupkar Alliance's DDC prospects

It won 2 Chairman posts with BJP help

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

The J&K Apni Party (JKAP), a new regional party floated post August 5, 2019 in Jammu and Kashmir, on Saturday won two District Development Council (DDC) Chairman posts with the help of the BJP, denting the prospects of the Gupkar Alliance that had its eye on heading all 10 districts in the Valley.

The JKAP, headed by former Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Minister and legislator Altaf Bukhari, won the DDC Chairman polls in Srinagar and Shopian districts.

An official said JKAP candidate Aftab Malik bagged 10 out of 14 votes against three votes bagged by the Gupkar Alliance candidate Kaiser Ganai, also a member of the National Conference, in Srinagar, to win the Chairman's post.

Independent support

The JKAP had won three seats in the DDC polls, held in November-December last year, out of 14 in Srinagar district. It required the sup-

port of four more candidates to win the Chairman's post. Sources said the BJP-backed Independent candidates also supported the JKAP.

In south Kashmir's Shopian, JKAP candidate Bilquees Akhtar polled eight votes to win the Chairman's post while the Gupkar Alliance candidate secured only six votes.

Sources said the JKAP candidate was short of one vote but a councillor from the Gupkar Alliance, which also won seven seats out of 14 in Shopian, voted in favour of the JKAP.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) candidate Muhammad Afzal Parray won the Chairman's post in Kulgam. The CPI(M) is the part of the Gupkar Alliance, apart from the NC and the PDP.

There are 20 districts in J&K, 10 each in the Kashmir region and the Jammu region. Under the first ever DDC polls last year, each district was divided into 14 segments and the elected candidates are now in the process of electing District Chairpersons of 20 districts.

Need for speed



Easy access: People browsing on their phones in Srinagar on Saturday, a day after high-speed mobile Internet services were restored in Jammu and Kashmir. The Centre had restricted 4G mobile Internet in the erstwhile State in August 2019. •NISSAR AHMAD

Mamata roadblock to Bengal's development: Nadra

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

BJP president J.P. Nadra on Saturday accused the Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal of creating

roadblocks to development. He was addressing a gathering at Nabadwip in Nadia district after flagging off the "Pariavartan Yatra" of the party.

"The Trinamool will be

defeated. Lotus will bloom here. Bengal will join the mainstream... This is what the 'Pariavartan Yatra' is all about," he said.

The yatra, using a bus con-

verted into a "rath" (chariot), is a major programme by the BJP to reach far-flung areas of West Bengal.

DETAILS ON ► PAGE 8

FSSAI caps trans fats in food products

Limit on TFA content from Jan. 2022

What are trans-fatty acids?

- Industrially produced trans-fatty acids (TFA) are found in **baked and fried foods**, pre-packaged snacks, cooking oils
- TFA is said to increase risk of **coronary heart disease**
- Globally, increased TFA intake is estimated to be responsible for more than **5,00,000 deaths** per year
- They cost less than animal fats such as butter and increase the shelf life of foods and oils by **lowering their oxidation potential**
- TFA increases levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol and decreases levels of HDL (good) cholesterol
- A survey of street food in Delhi and Haryana found that 25% of snacks had high levels of TFA



SOURCE: WHO

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has amended its rules to cap trans-fatty acids (TFAs) in food products, just weeks after it tightened the norms for oils and fats.

"Food products in which edible oils and fats are used as an ingredient shall not contain industrial trans-fatty acids more than 2% by mass of the total oils/fats present in the product, on and from 1st January, 2022,"

said the revised regulations notified recently and made public on Friday.

In December, the FSSAI had capped TFAs in oils and fats to 3% by 2021, and 2% by 2022 from the current levels of 5%.

"The 2% cap is considered to be elimination of trans-fatty acids, which we will achieve by 2022. We will be reaching this goal a year sooner than the WHO deadline," FSSAI CEO Arun Singhal told *The Hindu*.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 6

Three more held for R-Day violence

126 persons have been arrested so far, says Delhi Police

**STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI**
Three persons have been arrested in connection with the violence at the Red Fort on Republic Day during the tractor rally by farmers, the police said on Saturday.
The police said that the accused have been identi-

fied as Harpreet Singh, 32, Harjeet Singh, 48, and Dhar-mender Singh, 55, all resi-dents of Delhi.
They were arrested by the Special Investigation Team on Wednesday.
The police said that pic-tures of over 70 people in-volved in the violence have

been released to be identi-fied, and 126 persons have been arrested so far.
On January 26, protesting farmers had clashed with the police during the parade leaving several security per-sonnel and protesters in-jured. One protester had died during the incident.



Security personnel outside Jama Masjid metro station.
• SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Ten metro stations shut; services resume after 5 hours

**STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI**
The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Saturday closed the gates of 10 metro stations across the network in view of the *chakka jam* called by the protesting farmers.
The gates remained closed for over five hours and normal services were restored around 4 p.m., according to DMRC officials.
Entry and exit gates of Mandi House, ITO and Delhi Gate stations on the Violet Line were the first to get closed around 10.30 a.m.
This was followed by closure of entry and exit gates of the Vishwavidyalaya metro station, which is on the Yellow Line.
Following advisories from the Delhi police, the DMRC subsequently closed the gates of Lal Quila, Jama Masjid, Janpath and Central Secretariat metro stations, on the Violet Line.
However, interchange facilities were available during this period, according to metro officials.
The last two stations where the entry and exit gates were shut by the DMRC were Khan Market and Nehru Place metro stations which are also on the Violet Line.

Red Fort incident: Delhi police notice to gurdwara worker in U.P.

Team asks him to come to Capital to record statement



The people involved in the Republic Day violence are being traced with the help of video footage. •

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SHAHJAHANPUR**
On the lookout for those responsible for the Red Fort violence during a farmers' tractor parade on the Republic Day in the Capital, a team of the Delhi police on Saturday served a notice to a functionary of a gurdwara in Uttar Pradesh's Pilibhit.
The police team arrived at Puranpur, adjoining Shahjahanpur, and served notice to granthi Gurtej Singh, asking him to come to Delhi for re-

cording his statement, area SHO Suresh Kumar Singh said over the phone.
The team served the notice saying that a tractor from the gurdwara had gone to Delhi, the SHO said. The team later left for Shahjahanpur, he said.
According to locals, the team also visited the house of a farmer, Arshpreet, in Chamrabhoji village under the Khutar area and on failing to find him, pasted a notice there.

3 trade union office-bearers detained over *chakka jam*

60 protesters held near Shahidi Park; unions condemn 'fascist' measures of govt.

**STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI**
Three trade union office-bearers were detained in the wake of nationwide *chakka jam* called by the protesting farmers, the police said on Saturday.
The three persons who were detained are All India United Trade Union Centre (AIUTUC) Delhi State Secretary, Manager Chaurasia, Delhi Centre of Indian Trade Union's north district vice-president Vipin and All India Federation of Trade Union's National Treasurer and Delhi president Animesh Das.
We wanted to ensure no attempts were made by miscreants to cause any untoward incident in the garb of this event".
All India Kisan Mazdoor Sabha general secretary Ashish Mittal said that Dr. Das was picked up and detained at 5 a.m. and that officials were also posted outside Pragatisheel Mahila Sangathan general secretary Poonam to restrict her movement.
The CITU said that Mr. Vipin was detained around 12.30 a.m. from his residence and that "police misled him while picking him up but later told him that he had been picked up because of the *chakka jam* call".
AIUTUC president Harish Tyagi said that Mr. Chaurasia was placed under detention



Police detain an activist during a protest in support of the *chakka jam*, in the Capital, on Saturday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

at his house to prevent him from organising the workers' assembly on Saturday at Shahidi Park near ITO in solidarity with the farmers' 'chakka jam' call. "The AIUTUC condemns the fascist measures adopted by the Central government and its subservient Delhi Police to disrupt the solidarity gathering and thus, muzzle the democratic voice of the people," Mr. Tyagi said.
In a related development, at least 60 people were detained during the *chakka jam* near Shahidi Park.
A senior police officer said that protesting here wasn't allowed which led to detentions. All those detained were released later in the evening. On Friday, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha had said that protesters will not block roads in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand during the strike and only national highways will be blocked for three hours in a peaceful way.

50,000 security personnel keep vigil in Delhi

Drones, multiple layers of barricades, barbed wires at key points across the city

**STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI**
The Delhi police on Saturday were fully prepared for the *chakka jam* in case of any untoward incident.
Nearly 50,000 personnel were deployed across the city, including border points to ensure law and order.
The police said that forces were deployed at important points across the national capital, including the Red Fort and ITO which had witnessed violence on January 26 during a tractor parade by protesting farmers in which over 500 police personnel and several protesters sustained injuries.
The police also used



Security forces at Shahidi Park near ITO on Saturday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

of the precautionary measures taken by the police.

Social media
As police have been keeping a watch on social media, the same was closely monitored on Saturday to ensure rumours were not spread.
Delhi Police Public Relations Officer Chinmoy Biswal said adequate security arrangements were been put in place at the borders so that miscreants are not able to enter the national capital or congregate inside.
"We are monitoring content on the social media to make sure rumours are not spread against the police. The protesters are camp-

ing at the borders of Delhi. We are in touch with the police force of other States also," he added.
The police said that measures were taken to ensure that traffic and normal life is not affected.
Another senior police officer from East district said as a precautionary measure, iron nails studded on the roads have also been repositioned behind the barricades at the Ghazipur border, another protest site.
The police said that there were additional deployment of pickets at all the border points and all vehicles were being checked thoroughly at the entry and exit points.

We are taking all necessary COVID 19 Precautionary Measures.

BLAZERS SUITS & JACKETS SALE

upto 60% off

Formal • Casual • Party Collection
Men & Women wear
By Economy Sales: 9212758425

ARROW raymond ColorPlus LOUIS PHILIPPE PARK AVENUE

- PUNCHKUIAN ROAD, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chkr.)
- WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
- JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA , Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

INDIAN CANCER SOCIETY

RISE AGAINST CANCER

Don't let your fear of COVID-19 stop you from treating Cancer.

The whole world is struggling to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. This deep rooted fear of infection is taking a big toll on the public and especially Cancer patients. Many patients aren't keeping up with their treatment in hospitals. This is extremely risky and could result in disease progression or relapse.

Steps are being taken by doctors and hospitals to allay patient concerns. Aware hospitals are minimising risks with strict sanitation and isolation measures. Many hospitals have opted for separate entry and exit points for COVID patients and separate wards for patients with Cancer. Online consultation is being promoted to reduce footfalls in hospitals for minor health concerns.

While healthcare workers and hospitals are mindful, cancer patients need to be equally proactive by:

- + Getting all treatment-related information from their doctor for the next few months
- + Confirming their appointment before heading to the hospital and reaching on time. Checking visitor policy beforehand
- + Following all safety rules at the hospital so they or other patients don't face any inconvenience
- + Carrying water, sanitiser, extra masks with them

Cancer patients have to stay ahead of Cancer as well as COVID-19. That will only happen if we manage fear and practice precautions at all times.

For more information log on to: www.indiancancersociety.org or 1800 22 1951

SALE

SOCIETY PROPERTY FOR SALE

31000 Sq.ft. Society property of R1556 The Tiruchirappalli

Highways Co-operative Housing Society Ltd.

is for sale through

e-Tender

Our Tender Reference: THCHSL/HS/1556/2021

Website

<https://tntenders.gov.in/nicegep/app>

GENERAL

SITUATIONS VACANT

GENERAL

ST. MICHAEL'S SR. SEC. SCHOOL
3, PUSA ROAD, NEW DELHI - 110005

Requires:- One Each

- PGT - Physical Education -Male
- TGT- Western Music -Male
- Librarian - Male / Female
- Front Desk Officer cum Office Asst. -Female (B.Com with Computer Tally & letter drafting must)

Qualification, Age & Salary: As per Govt. Rules.
Candidates should have Proficiency in English, Basic Computer knowledge and Two years' experience preferred.
Application form available from 8th to 18th Feb, 2021 on working hours.

Principal

PUBLIC NOTICE

MY CLIENT Ishwardass Talwar And His Wife Kusum Talwar R/O S-204, School Block, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092 Have Disowned Her Daughter Bhawna Talwar Along With Her Family From All Our Movable And Immoveable Property. Advocate: Sharad Kumar S-625, School Block, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092. 9911789602

BUSINESS OFFER

BUSINESS

LONG TERM Individual Investors Need to Support Export Orders on Monthly Profit sharing
Ct:8667706030

BUSINESS FOR SALE

FACTORY JVS/ALE suitable for Pharma Food&Agri Bio Products:7338884439

FINANCE

Contact for big property project loan @ low interest 7703886032

LOAN FOR High Level Projects & Properties from 10 Cr to 1000 Cr R.O.J @ 3.5% to 8% with feasible tenure No prepayment. Ct: 98843 27792, Email: hiriseventures@gmail.com

EXPRESS LOAN upto 800Cr against Prop. with Max LTV 80% for Project / Business / Sick Units. Call 9540919222, 9310407147

MEDICAL

WANTED RADIOLOGIST Full Time in Thiruvannamalai Contact-9500909066

REAL ESTATE

SELLING

RESIDENTIAL

Sale Noida-Kothi 5BHK,162Mtr@ 2Cr Plot 112.5 Sqmtr. P facing 1.25 Cr. Plot/kothi - 450/360/250/200 Mtr. Nirula -9810620490

SELLING

GENERAL

HIGHWAY FRONT Property: 70 cents Commercial/Residential prime plot with 3730 SQFT, 5BHK Premium House and Cellular area for sale, facing Pala - Thodupuzha Highway. Call owner-09446204274 / 0482 2262228.

REGIONAL

EDUCATIONAL

CSAT

Demo Class 7th
Live Online Classes Feb.
www.passionias.com
PASSION IAS
971-830-9602, 783-849-2960

PURABI DAIRY

West Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Ltd.
Juripar, Panjabari, Guwahati - 781037

Ref No. MD/PC/WAMUL/Short Tender/20-21/03 Dated 7th February 2021

SHORT NOTICE FOR REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

The West Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Limited (WAMUL) intends to purchase the following items from the eligible bidder as mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Category	Date of publishing tender	Last date of submission of Quotations
1	Hiring of Insulated Road Milk Tanker	08-02-2021	08-03-2021

The details of the Short tender will be published and available at WAMUL's website www.purabi.org/tenders.php as mentioned above. Sd/- Managing Director

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

SAD DEMISE

D.O.B :		D.O.D :
26		06
10		02
1928		2021

SHRI.K.NARAYANAN

AMIE, Consulting Electrical Engineer.

Deeply Mourned by

Wife, Sons, Daughters, Sons-in-law, Daughters-in-law, Grand Children, Brothers & Sisters.

Cremation on 07.02.2021 at Kannammappet 1.30pm

Add: No.5,34th St, Ashok Nagar,Chennai-83. Ct: 044-24895569 / 9752597844

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

12th ANNIVERSARY

R RAJALAKSHMI
W/O. Late Navalpakkam Rajagopalan
"You are living in our Hearts"
Fondly Remembered By

Raaghavan and Sudha
Krishnamurthy and Sandhya
Sampath and Jayshree
Radha and Selvakumar
Kalyani and Suryanarayan
Grand Children and Great Grand Children...

For enquiries on announcements in this section, please contact our office at the following number between 10a.m. and 8p.m.

New Delhi : 011- 43579797

Rate for New Delhi:
(Minimum Rs. 320/- 2 Lines
Extra Line - Rs.160/-)
(B/W Display): Rs.60/Per Sq.cm
(Clr Display) : Rs.70/Per Sq.cm

Log on to
www.thehinduads.com
For Placing Advertisements
Online

MATRIMONIAL

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

BRIDES WANTED

BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

Classification common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms

Assamese

Awadhi

Bengali

Bhojpuri

Bihari

Chhattisgarhi

English

Gujarati

Haryanvi

Hindi

Kannada

Kashmiri

Konkani

Malayalam

Manipuri

Marathi

Marwari

Nepali

Oriya

Parsi

Punjabi

Saurashtra

Sindhi

Tamil

Telugu

Tulu

Urdu

Advocate

Business

Defence

Doctor

Engineer

Finance/ Banking

Government/ Quasi-Govt.

IAS/ Allied Services

Information Technology

MBA/ CA/ ICWA

NRI

Cosmopolitan

Divorcee

Physically Challenged

MARRIAGE BUREAUS

WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

BENGALI

BENGALI, KAYASTHA girl, Msc 34 yrs/ 55", Debari, wrkg in Chennai, CTC 7.5 lacs seeks suitable match. M: 9003221731.

COSMOPOLITAN

PROPOSAL invited from professional/ly qualified youth for a Hindu Ezhava girl 30 yrs, 156 cm, slim, healthy from Thrissur, Kerala presently employed in USA 9847256736

B.COM, FCT (NIFT), Female, 40, Unmarried, Kshatriya, working in MNC. Looking for Hindu, Educated and settled family in Hyd. Contact: 9849876335

HINDU - MA, M.Arch, Dip French, 27 yrs, Kathriga, 165 cm, self employed - Chennai Based - Tamil Chettiar/ Malayalee Warrier parents - looking for professionally qualified groom. Contact +91 9840192925

DOCTOR

DOCTOR-PAEDIATRICIAN, 42, Chennai- Christian, 10yrs daughter, strong family n social value needs Bri degroom aged 40-45yrs. Professionals, Doctors preferred. 9443711511

DOCTOR / MBBS /26/ Hindu/ SC /Dc Asst Commr of GST & Customs, qualified for PLAB 2 exam - UK seeks alliance from Doctors settled in foreign Cheval at 7. Subcastes/ Inter-caste acceptable - MD MScM MCh boys from good families in Kerala & Tamil Nadu. Ct: 9840050381

ENGLISH

HINDU TAMIL Mukkulathor, Magam, Chevai at 7, 25/ 170 cm, MSc Stat, HR Analyst Bengaluru, Seeks Professionally Qualified Groom having Chevai at 7. Subcastes/ Inter-caste acceptable - 096633 13500. gobinath.thamarajan@gmail.com

GOVT / QUASI GOVT

✓ **BALUJA NAIDU**, 25 yrs/155 cm, BE working in Govt insurance company in Blore seeks educated, well settled groom within 28yrs age, Caste No bar. Contact with biodata 94890 54365

IAS / ALLIED SERVICES

IAS OFFICER Hindu SC-AD 29/167 seeks groom IAS, IPS, Civil Service, Cent Govt Doctor, Defence Officer - language/Caste No bar. Cont:7305407004

IAS 25 North Indian Sub Collector / 40000 p.m Caste No Bar Very Fair Bride seeks Any Civil Service Groom/ Any Caste.7305491610

KANNADA

HINDU VOK GOWDA 26 B.E Seeks Groom of Same Comnty 9791768175

MALAYALAM

MUSLIM GIRL, divorcee 30/165, One boy, Graduate, good looking, seeks suitable alliance. Ph: 8089338010

NAIR GIRL 27/154cm B.E., employed Chennai settled, slight Dosham 8th Chovva seeks Chennai settled Nair family. 9500012855

NRI

REQD USA Settled Godly Man for USA Employed Born Again/Christian Gud looking Girl 34yrs/162. Ct:9448852772

REDDY/REDDIYAR, UNMARRIED, girl, BE (cs)- plani, MScs, Nov 90/5.8", H1B, S/W, US\$1.5 LPA, San Jose, CA. Parents seek USA groom from Amiable family. Email: ksnr.usa@gmail.com Ph: +91 9885584816

TAMIL

HINDU/DKV 32/152 B.E. Middle Class. Divorcee Seeks Suitable Groom. Caste No Bar. 94896 95984

CHRISTIAN PARENTS seek a suitable God fearing, polite and good character groom for daughter, 39, Post-graduate from the U.K. and currently working for the family business in India. Contact parents with details and photograph. Email: sam.selini@outlook.com.

38/168 CSI/COC innocent divorcee working in Australia seeks professional groom below 40, willing to relocate Australia 9840255028, 9940678431

ROMAN CATHOLIC Sozhia Vellala Tamil Girl 44/158 MB/A / Wheatish, Good Looking, Never Married, Employed in Bangalore, Earning Hand-some Salary, Seeks suitable Groom, Caste No Bar. Willing to Relocate. Contact:Clement: 9840022828 between 7pm & 10pm

AD/CHRISTIAN/CSI 35 yrs/165 cms B.Tech, M.B.A, software Eng CTS, seeks employed Bride groom Ct: 9791322674, 9600498995.

CSI TAMIL Christian Pillai Vellalar Girl, M.Arch, Fair, 32 yrs / 160 cms, Affluent similar profiles welcomed. Language no bar. Ph: 98348 36842.

CSI CHRISTIAN Nadar Girl Fair, Good Looking, 03-04-1986 born / 152cm / M.Sc M.Phil., working as Assistant Professor in a Reputed Women's College, Mount Road, Chennai. Both Parents Doctors (Private) Suitable Alliance, Employed / Settled in Chennai / With Clean Habits from Same Community. Contact: 9841182514

ALLIANCE INVITED from Christian parents for 25 MBBS Doctor Central Govt. MD/MS/MBBS prfd. Whatsapp: 9442532552/ danielbenazer1951@gmail.com

TAMIL MUSLIM Girl 27/165, BE, MBA, Fair, 6Lac pa. Preferd Chennai/ abroad Settled. Ct: 6381637552 Whatsapp

OUR DAUGHTER - B.E. MBA/IIM, Height 5' 28 Yrs Working/Abroad, is looking for Highly educated groom and Working Abroad. Ph: 9842431806, mveeran@hotmail.com.

HINDU SC (AD) 30yrs/155cms/F, well settled, elite IPS seeks suitable Groom below 35 years, Caste no bar. Contact: 944539127 E-mail: itdsaranmih72@hotmail.com. (After 5 pm)

MUDALIAR/ 26 years' Uthirathathi/ 5'5" Fair/ Good looking, B.COM, ACS, (Company Secretary) , Rs.5 Lakhs p.a.Chennai, well settled / sub sects no bar Contact : 9444787836/ 9952045947

HINDU, NADAR, 39,158, BE, Chennai required decent educated groom Ct:737797998 selva.sv@gmail.com

HINDU BRIDE 37 B.Sc Smart Upper Middle class AnnaNgr Chennai 1st marriage needs suitable groom.73581 64190

BRAMIN 25/ M.Tech Senior computer Vision Engineer (MNC) 70,000 p.m very fair, seeks groom. Iyer also Ok. Contact: 9884300680

EMPLOYED QUALIFIED bridegrooms wanted for SC/AD/MSC/DB 1983/ Vishakam,Dhulaim bride 9498313625, 9444279610

SENGUNTHAR BE 29/160 IT Analyst TCS Seeks Only Sengunthar Groom IT Professional Preferably TCS/MNC Ct: 9677055142

HINDU RAJAKULA AGAMUDAYAR family settled in USA, 24 / 57", fair, M.S, Engg, seeks equally qualified Groom for their daughter from same community, willing to settle in USA. Contact: VM95Family@gmail.com

SC/AD BUDDHIST 30/150 MSc,BL, Advocate seeks Groom with Rational Values settled in Chennai Ph:962351059

✓ **HINDU NADAR** (CASTE no bar), 29/168, Pooram, doing MSc in Metallurgy, Chennai settled, good looking, caste acceptable - 096633 13500. gobinath.thamarajan@gmail.com

TAMIL

VANNIYAR (Subject No bar) Krihika Mesham 25/160 TN Govt Lady Doctor MBBS Slim Fair, Seeks Suitable Tamil groom clean habits Doctor / Higher Officer / Business below 30yrs. Contact: 9443214509, e-Mail: tprangan1934@gmail.com

HINDU VANNIYAR B.E.SWE. 28/165. Parents Govt Service.Chennai Based same Caste-9444257712

HINDU NADAR Girls(Twins) 25, 165, Ms final year Eng/Seeks Grooms Preferably EngineersBelow 29yr 9500037429

MUDALIAR/PILLAI 33 154 MCA Upper Middle Class Settle Chennai seek Prof Qualify of Same Caste 8220757159

SAIVA PILLAI 32 155cm Visagam BE MBA US Veg seeks US Prof. Geetham 9884858014 whats app only

HINDU DKV Pallan Ashwini 24/157 Doctor, Seeks Doctor Groom. 9443151045

DIVORCE, 51, MSc, Good Look, No Issues Seeks Companion from Good Family CNB, Ct: 8778514465/7200829304

SAIVAPILLAI +2 widow No Kids Smart want well settled Person Widower only age limit (50 to 60) 8778805439

MUDALIAR/ PILLAI NV (Bengaluru), 33/165, MD, Medicine seeks educated highly qualified groom from decent family. 9444005318, 9449037763.

ELITE, MUDALIYAR 29/ Own Engineering Colleges, Schools, Wind mills (All Over India) seeks groom. 9940284235

ELITE MUDALIYAR 24 Own steel Factory, TMT Rod Company Rich Family Seeks groom. 99402 84235

ELITE, MUDALIYAR 23/ B.E., own (Sintex water Tank) Manufacturer well to do family seeks groom. 73054 91610.

HINDU, 29/167cm, Fair, B.Tech/ PGDM(IIM), Sr.Mgr, drawing above 18L/ PA seeks well educated Groom. Caste No Bar. Ct: 90808 83174.

Agamudayar Girl (Bgnl) BDS(HS) 22 5'2" Kannl Uthiram Contact - 9739173750 Whatsapp

MARUTHUVAR - HINDU 24yrs, ME Engg, working in reputed MNC Chennai, Good Looking Girl, Seeks GROOM from good family well settled, send all details to kumarachennai566@gmail.com PH 7299737271

NAIDU 25 yr old, B.Tech bride Star-Rohini, working in MNC in Chennai seeking 27-31 yr old, well-educated Tamil/Telugu groom, middle-upper middle class family from Tamilnadu, working in Govt/Public/MNC sector based in Chennai/Blore. Caste No Bar. 7401234999/9841402261

VISHWAKARMA TAMIL, Unconsummated Divorcee, Fair, 29/57", Qualified - BE, M.B.A, NET, Doing PhD Central Univ, Seeks Decent Groom, Ct: 8925112287

MUDALIAR 35/155, Ph.D, Ashwini, divorcee, issueless working in UK seeks kind, qualified, unmarried or divorcee, issueless working in UK less than 40 yrs. Caste no bar. Ct: 9845270442/ 988442592, sekizar.vs@gmail.com

GROOM WANTED for working woman from reputed Tamil family / MCA / Chennai / Dec 89 / 5'7" / Any caste / Contact 98401 31588

R.C. SOZHIA Vellalar Girl 28/ 154 U.S.Citizen, employed with Master Cards U.S. is looking for a well settled U.S. Citizen fm suitable family background with prof.exp B.E., Doctor, I.T. preferred. Mail: sc13ashok@gmail.com or call U.S. +1(801)243-8631 IND 9884275644.

AGAMUDAIYAR 45 MSc IT in Chennai seeks Groom (1st Marriage) from OBC Mob- 9445612997

Hindu DKV, 25yrs / 165cm (Rahu Kedu), BE(EEE) Seeks well educated and employed Groom. Ct: 90878 76257

VANNIYA KULA Kshatriya well settled in Canada looking for educated groom, willing to settle in Canada/ US for our daughter, 25 yrs pursuing law. Whatsapp +1 571 457 0309 or Email pushpara2005@hotmail.com

M.S.C M.PHIL, 27, Chennai, Employed Forward Veg Bride seeks Veg Eminent Groom. Caste no Bar. 8124982764

HINDUVAR,FAIR SLIM 25 yrs B.E 5'8"seeks suitable fair good looking working professional.Contact:94 86407217

SC AD, Hindu, B.E MBA, 25-9-89, 57", Kadagam Poosam, 13LPA, Well settled seeks suitable groom. Ph- 9840401929

HINDU TAMIL Pallan / 44 / BE Comp / Works in Public Sector Bank seeks from the same caste equal age, Computer Engg, foreign deputation employment delayed marriage proposal Ct: 94447752894

SCA MS DR 27/162 fair, slim, Govt seeks Doctor / Group A service Groom. Contact: 7842074730.

HINDU SC AD 33, BE SWE TCS 95000/ p.m, seeks suitable grooms working in Chennai/Bangalore Ct 9952147216

CHETTIAR (CNB): 25/155, Fair,MBBS,MD, Father Business, Elite Family- Seeks Groom Doctor/ Eng- 8939012419

MUDALIAR 28/166 V.Fair MBA Steel & Metal Industry Own Gym,Elite Family, Seeks Groom Business/Eng 7305810258

MUDALIAR, 28YRS, 5'5", B.E., PGDM (MBA), MNC, earning above 18 L/pa, seeks professionally qualified, employed Groom. Sub-sect no bar. Ct: 7550194136, 9444901994.

HINDU VANNIYAR girl 27/154/hashtam good looking M. D. Paed. IInd year residing combatore native villupuram seeks M. D.M.S./IAS good looking and good family vanniya groom Ct: 9486518665 mamuthaib63@yahoo.com

HINDU ADIDRAVIDAR Kongu Parayar 29 BE, M.Tech, Ph.D seeks Educated Prof. Groom. Ct:7558146647/ 8973453570

TAMIL HINDU, PG Doctor, 32/158 cm, well settled PG Doctor, PG Engineer, Reputed Business groom. Upper caste only. Ph. 9710932333

TAMIL

ELITE GROOM WANTED

EDUCATION : MD Paediatrics 2nd Yr.

AGE : 26

CASTE : VANIYA CHETTIYAR

STAR : POOSAM

PARENTS : ELITE BUSINESS FAMILY

SEEKS

➤ **MD/MS/ well educated Business Groom**

➤ **Vaniya Chettiyar preferred**

➤ **Preferably within India.**

Kindly Contact for further Details

94431 52723

94432 52723

94433 52723

TAMIL

MUDALIYAR AFFLUENT family in Chennai seeks highly qualified groom in India / Abroad from same community for their good looking only daughter 30/160,Uthiram no dosam, graduate from NIFT. Whatsapp/ Call:9444319929

Hindu Senguntha Mudaliyar 25 / 153 Mithunam thiruvadrali no dosam MBBS MS Gynaecology fair slim looking daughter of a Surgeon good family background Seeks upsc, upso group 1 services groom. Contact : 75981 87528

HINDU NADAR 22/165 cm BE Fair Rich Kumbam Poorattathi IAS IPS Groom. Wanted Chennai Contact: 9840887788

GAVARA NAIDU ME/26 Divorcee, No issues seeks suitable Broad minded groom born in1990s & well settled 9444049457/vthayalanacs@yahoo.co.in

TELUGU

SC / AD 26 years Dr. MBBS. Seeks IAS / IRS / Dr. Groom. Cont : 9843732921

HINDU SC PR Kongu 36, MBBS DCH Doctor, working in Govt Hospital, seeks suitable groom.Ct:94436 80973.

KAMMA BE, MS in USA 1980/163, Uthiram seeks BE, MS(USA) Groom. Contact: 9976254300

PQM GOOD looking affluent family Telugu Naidu Girl, MBA Fin, MNC Bank, 18 Lacs. 9440072717

BALUJA NAIDU 29/172, Fair, MBBS, Asst Surgeon, TN Govt. Service, seeks Groom preferably Naidu Doctor / Professionally qualified below 33 yrs. Contact Mobile: 9444926772 / 9444955540, E.Male: nimalakvasu@gmail.com



Exclusive matchmaking service for the elite
From BharatMatrimony

ELITE BRIDES WANTED

BRAHMIN, 27, 173 cms, Businessman, Chartered Accountant, Lives in Chennai, Father is an affluent Businessman with a good net worth. Looking for a compatible and well educated match from the same community. Contact: 6366448344

PILLAI/CASTE NO BAR, 27, 185 cms, Businessman, Masters in Business Management, Lives in Coimbatore. Father is an affluent Businessman with a good net worth. Looking for a suitable well educated match from any community. Contact: 6366448346

CHETTIAR/CASTE NO BAR, 29, 183 cms, Pursuing Medicine, Lives in Coimbatore, Father is a Businessman, Family is financially well off. Looking for a suitable and well educated match from any community. Contact: 6366448344

MUDALIYAR, 34, 183 cms, Professional, Masters in Engineering, Lives in Sweden, Father is a working Professional. Looking for a well educated match from the same community. Contact: 6366448346

NADAR/CASTE NO BAR, 26, 178 cms, Businessman, Masters in Business Administration, Lives in Chennai, Father is an affluent Businessman with a good net worth. Looking for a well educated match from any community. Contact: 6366448343

Call for Free Consultation 99629 76000

www.elitematrimony.com

TAMIL

VADAKALI SRIVATSAM Uttarathadi 29/5.9 B.Tech TCS 10 Lpa Chennai, No Siblings, Seeks Well Educated, working, Vadakali Groom Ct: 9003349643

Tamil Iyer Girl in Germany, 29/152, M.S., Kettai, Athreya, seeks Groom from same sect. Aged 30-32 Yrs, working in Germany. Ct: 8939755291.

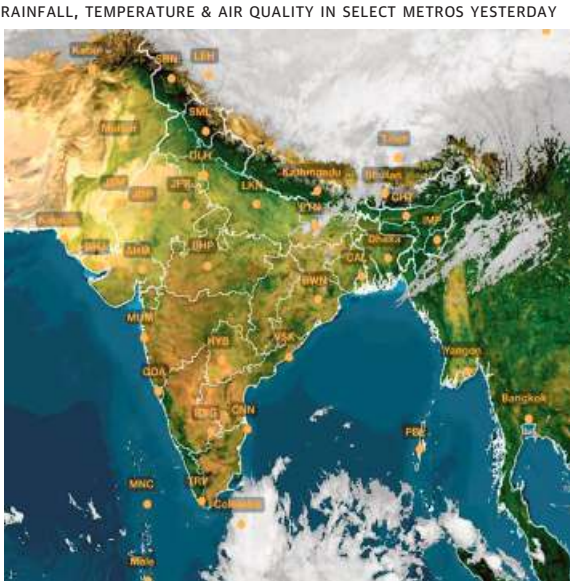
BRIDE AGED 31.M.A English, Working, Seeking Groom, Age above 31, Iyer/Saiva pillai/Veg, Chennai only. Ct: 9600093362

IYER FAMILY

BRAHMIN BOY

We wish to have alliance for a beautiful girl (27 yrs) who has finished her masters from a

WEATHER WATCH



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya. Dense fog likely in isolated pockets over north Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Cold wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over north Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Odisha

Table with 7 columns: CITY, RAIN, MAX, MIN, CITY, RAIN, MAX, MIN. Lists weather data for various Indian cities.

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Table with 7 columns: CITIES, SO, NO, CO, PM2.5, PM10, CODE. Includes a 'Yesterday' column and a detailed AQI legend.

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Adeserted porch and iron shutters over the main gate is a common sight at most single-screen theatres in the city.

The halls shut down on March 13, 2020, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and most of them are still closed despite the Delhi government allowing them to reopen.

Theatres were among the worst-hit in the entertainment sector during the lockdown, and occupancy restrictions still make doing business tough, especially for single-screen theatres. Many employees of small halls have had their salaries halved.

Fifty-year-old Vijay Singh, who has been working as a ticket-booking clerk at Gagan Cinema in Nand Nagri for the last 36 years, misses the time before the pandemic. "The hall would be full if a Salman Khan movie was playing. You would find as many people outside the hall as inside... but now, we sit idle all day, taking a stroll or basking in the sun," he says.

"I used to earn ₹16,000 a month before the outbreak. After the hall shut, the salaries of all employees were halved. But we are all grateful to the owner of the cinema hall for continuing to give us a pay cheque," says Mr. Singh.

Salary cut

The salary cut has forced Mr. Singh and his family to reduce their expenses. "I have two sons and a daughter. My oldest son is married and lives with us. Earlier, we used to get three litres of milk every day, now we make do with 1.5 litres. Each of us used to have four cups of tea daily, now we have just two. This is the practical cost of the situation," he says.

Mr. Singh has had to prolong his daughter's wed-



For single-screen theatres, it's still a 'no show'

Many small cinema halls in Delhi have their shutters down despite the govt. allowing them to reopen

ding celebrations as well. "We fixed the marriage of my daughter 10 days ago but we will organise the functions a year from now when our financial condition is better," he says.

Even though the cinema hall is closed, Mr. Singh makes the two-minute walk to the theatre daily. "My daughter-in-law is at home. It doesn't look nice if I idle away at home, so, I come in [to the theatre] at 10 a.m. and leave at 7 p.m."

Ramashish Yadav, 43, who has been working as a security guard at west Delhi's Milan Cinema for the past nine years, is living in a makeshift accommoda-



(Top) Gagan Cinema in Nand Nagri; Milan Cinema in west Delhi's Karam Pura.

tion under the stairs leading to the hall.

His utensils and groceries are kept on the stairs and he prepares his meals on a stove near his bed.

Mr. Yadav, who hails

from Uttar Pradesh, used to earn ₹10,000 a month before the outbreak, but now gets about ₹7,000. He is barely able to make ends meet as he sends most of the money back home to

his wife and children. "The employees are all old. They will not be able to get a job anywhere else," he says. It is a fear Mr. Singh shares.

In north Delhi's Amba, a theatre that used to be popular with college students, cinema manager Virender Antin, 35, surfs the Internet on his phone while sitting outside the entrance of the hall. He comes 15 days a month and gets ₹8,500. Earlier, he used to get ₹18,000 a month.

Life has become tough, says the father of two school-going children. "My kids have to attend online classes. I had to buy a smartphone for them and took a loan from my parents," he says, adding that school fees is a major expense for them now.

"I live in Bawana and used to take the scooter to work, spending ₹150 on petrol every day. Now, I take the bus. It takes me two and a half hours one way and ₹15 a day. I have no other option," he says, adding that he has had to take money from family and friends to manage his household.

No new release

"The government has allowed reopening of theatres but no new films are releasing. The multiplexes may be able to manage even if a few people show up at every screen. We have only one screen and only two-three people turned up, but it stills costs us electricity and full staff attendance is needed," he says.

At Ritz Cinema in Kashmere Gate, peon Jaiveer, 49, says: "Poore din baithe rehte hain... man hi nahi lagta [I keep sitting idle all day... there's no fun in that]. He is somehow managing the household with his curtailed salary. His two sons, one in Class 12 and another in first year of college, have deferred their education to find jobs and help their parents.

Assam activist alleges threat for decision to contest polls

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

An activist based in eastern Assam's Bokakhat, near the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, has claimed that the State machinery has been intimidating him ever since he decided to contest the coming Assembly election as an independent candidate.

Pranab Doley, founder of a peasant and farm worker organisation Jeepal Krishak Sramik Sangha, said eight armed men in "police uniform" came knocking around midnight on February 3, a day after he announced his candidature for the Bokakhat constituency in Golaghat district.

"They parked their large vehicle outside the gate of my house and rapped on the door at 11.30 p.m. They left as people gathered upon being alerted by our dogs. The heavily armed men were in police uniform," Mr. Doley told The Hindu on Saturday.

Bokakhat Sub-Divisional Police Officer P. Rajkhowa denied any involvement of the police in the incident. "Our men did not carry out any such operation in and around his house," he said.

'Been victimised'

"I have been victimised along with senior activist Sonesar Narah by the system since I raised my voice against fake encounters of local villagers by the Kaziranga's forest protection force," he said.

His supporters had been carrying out rallies to protest alleged bullying by the BJP-AGP combine. "Some 3,000 of them took to the streets today [Saturday] too," he added.

Farmers block several roads in Rajasthan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JAIPUR

Farmers protesting against the Centre's agriculture sector laws blocked the roads and highways at several places in Rajasthan for three hours on Saturday in response to the chakka jam call. Congress leaders also joined the agitating farmers at many places.

Farmers in Sriganganagar, Hanumangarh, Jhalawar, Dholpur and Jaipur blocked the highways and held demonstrations. A massive tractor rally was taken out in Kota. The Delhi-Jaipur National Highway was completely blocked. There were no reports of any untoward incident.

pcc president Govind Singh Dotsara said the party workers had joined the farmers to make the blockade successful and ensured that it was peaceful.

Delhi police notices to Baghpat farmers over R-Day violence

'It is to instil fear so that we don't protest against farm laws'

ANUJ KUMAR GHAZIABAD

Exercising powers under Section 160/91 of CrPc, Delhi Police has served notices on farmers in Baraut town of Baghpat district to join the investigation in connection to Republic Day violence in the Capital.

The notice issued by Pandav Nagar and Seemapuri police stations said, "The investigation revealed that there were reasonable grounds to ascertain facts and circumstances from you."

Serious IPC sections

The FIR has been registered under serious sections such as 307 (attempt to murder), 353 (criminal assault on public servant) 147 (rioting) 395 (dacoity), 397 (robbery) and

120B (criminal conspiracy) of IPC. The farmers have been called to the police station on Sunday.

Brijpal Singh, a member of Desh khap, and Thamba Chaudhary of five villages, claimed they didn't go to Delhi on the said date. "I was at the protest site in Baraut. It seems it is an attempt to instil fear in us so that we do not protest against farm laws." He said he would reply through his lawyer.

Pandav Nagar Police Station SHO confirmed that the notices have been issued. Sub-Inspector Niraj Kumar said those who were under suspicion had been served notices. "We are thoroughly evaluating different kinds of evidence since January 26 and a list has been prepared. The charges are serious. We

don't want any innocent to be arrested. After two-three rounds of questioning, it would be clear who were actually part of the violence."

He said at least 10 people in Baghpat were served notices. "The notices are also being served in other districts of west U.P. and Punjab. We are working with the local police," he said.

In a separate development, farmer leaders from the district have also been asked by the local administration to sign personal bonds "to maintain peace".

Meanwhile, addressing a gathering at the Ghazipur protest site on Saturday, BKU spokesperson Rakesh Tikait said farmers would hold protests at police stations if the notices were not withdrawn.

Odisha revenue officials, policemen get jab

STAFF REPORTER BHUBANESWAR

Top revenue and police officials of Odisha on Saturday flooded social media platforms with photographs of them getting jab to dispel fear. As the State began vaccinating, front-line workers,

senior officials took the lead to take vaccine shots in front of their subordinates.

Director General of Police Abhay was the first among the front-line workers to take the vaccine at Cuttack. At district level, Collectors and Superintendents of Police got

themselves vaccinated.

Photographs and videos were uploaded immediately on social media to do away with fear.

"There is no point to get scared. Crores of people across the world are receiving vaccine shots," said Sud-

hansu Sarangi, Commissioner of Police for Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

In Malkangiri district, where the Border Security Force personnel were deployed to fight the Left Wing Extremists, they were also administered vaccine.

BJP ally, SP demand compensation for damaged boats in Prayagraj

Nishad Party has sought action against police, administration

OMAR RASHID LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav has accused the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh of 'kicking the belly' of the Nishad community, an Other Backward Class caste, after boats belonging to them were allegedly damaged by the police and administration in Prayagraj district during an anti-mining drive.

Following the incident, the BJP's ally in the State, the Nishad Party, has also demanded action against the police and administrative officials who allegedly damaged the boats and lathi-charged Nishad boatmen and labourers, men and women, near the Yamuna river on February 4.

"By breaking the boats of

the Nishad community in Prayagraj, the BJP government has kicked on their bellies," Mr. Yadav tweeted.

The BJP government should immediately apologise to the Nishad community and provide them new boats for livelihood, Mr. Yadav demanded.

On February, 4, a joint team of police personnel and administrative and mining officials landed up at Mohabbatganj and Baswar village in the trans-Yamuna area of the district after complaints of alleged mining. Dozens of people on boats were digging sand out of the Yamuna, said Prayagraj police.

Officials explained to the people there that they were engaging in illegal work and illegal mining and that legal

action could be taken against them, said the police.

Local TV channels and portals showed police chasing the people assembled at the spot with batons in order to evict them. Sanjay Nishad, president of the Nishad Party accused the police of lathi-charge on "innocent women and children" and use of an earthmover to break some boats belonging to the community.

Prayagraj police, however, said when the team reached there, people started to get "aggressive" and insisted on carrying on with the mining. A person from the crowd then pelted stones, police said. The police said it used "restraint to send back the people from the site.

Table with 7 columns: No., SII/Auction Programme-1/March-2021, e-AUCTION SALE DURING MARCH, 2021 FOR P - WAY & OTHER VARIOUS SCRAP, SPECIAL ATTENTION : ALL STEEL PURCHASERS & RE-ROLLERS, 1st Round, 2nd Round, 3rd Round, 4th Round, Depot, Depot Officer in Charge, Contact No.

Table with 4 columns: S.N., Short description of Item, Quantity, T.O.D. (Western Railway E-Procurement Tender Notice No. S/05/2021 Dated : 03.02.2021)

Note for Sr. No.97 : A pre-bid meeting is being organised on 09.02.2021 at 15.00 hrs. with potential suppliers on Zoom. The Zoom ID is 83682518410 Password is 9wJBJ. Interested vendors may get the specification and tender details from www.ireps.gov.in. For any clarification vendor may contact to Shri S.B. Mishra (Dy CMM / Admn) on 9004490769.

SEARCH FOR MISSING
General public is hereby informed that a female (depicted in the photo), Namely: Parvati Devi W/o Late Sh. Padam Singh R/o Village Kandi, P.O. Chardhar, Patti Idwalasue, Pouri, Garwal, Uttarakhand has been missing/abducted from the area of P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi since 07.01.2020. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 232/20 u/s 365 IPC dated 12.07.2020 has been lodged at Police Station Kashmere Gate, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-
Age: 82 Years, Height: 5', Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Build: Normal, Wearing: White colour saree and blouse and hawai sleeper in feet.
Any person having any information/Clue about this missing female, may inform SHO, Kashmere Gate, Delhi at E-mail Id - cbc@cbi.gov.in or Website: http://cbi.nic.in
Phone: 011-24368638, 24368641 P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi
Fax No. 011-24368639 North Distt., Delhi
DP/15/01/2020 Ph. No. 011-23967889, 23968730, 8760870123

FROM PAGE ONE

Farmers block roads, toll plazas in protest

This included the core demand for repeal of the laws as well as a protest against the government and the police intimidation, in the form of arrests, missing people, barricades, and the suspension of power, water and Internet services. The third focus was on the cut in the allocation for the agriculture sector in the Union Budget this year.

He also expressed anger at Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar's statement in Parliament on Friday. "During the talks, he said he was ready to make changes to remove whatever is problematic in the laws. But yesterday, he said the laws are in the interests of farmers, which is a lie."

The road blockades seemed to be most extensive in Punjab and Haryana. Apart from a blockade at Palwal on the Delhi-Agra Highway by around 2,000 farmers, protesters blocked the major Delhi-Jaipur and Delhi-Ambala highways as well. Overall, protesters blocked roads in at least 300 places across Haryana, said Haryana Kisan Sabha vice-president Inderjit Singh.

The protest was also peaceful in Punjab, where farmers blocked roads and

hampered the movement of traffic in several districts. Farmers were seen shouting slogans against the government, but the crowd at Mohali's Phase-7 road intersection, a prominent protest location, was thinner than during previous protests.

In Delhi, where there was no plan for road blockades, a solidarity meeting organised by trade union activists and others was sought to be organised at a park in the Income Tax Office area, which saw high levels of violence and chaos on Republic Day.

The police took at least three trade union leaders into preventive custody in the morning, and then detained about 60 protesters at the park itself. Nearly 50,000 police personnel were deployed across the city, with others monitoring social media for rumours, while drones scanned key locations. Farm unions reported police detentions at Jaura in Madhya Pradesh, near Yelahanka stadium in Bengaluru, and a highway near Hyderabad.

(With inputs from Vikas Vasudeva in Punjab, Ashok Kumar in Gurugram, and Hemani Bhandari, Jatin Anand and Priscilla Jebaraj in New Delhi)

NITI Aayog seeks to track impact of green verdicts

Projects to be analysed include the construction of an airport in Mopa, Goa; cessation of iron ore mining in Goa, and the shutting down of the Sterlite copper plant in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu.

The others are decisions by the NGT involving sand mining, and construction activities in the National Capital Region.

"These have been some of the most significant cases in the recent past that have caused substantial damage to the economy," the brief notes. The study is to be undertaken by the Jaipur-headquartered CUTS (Consumer Unity and Trust Society) Centre for Competition, Investment and Economic Regulation, that also has an international presence.

"The judiciary needs to take into account environment, equity and economic considerations while deciding cases, and needs to institutionalise a mechanism for it," the brief notes.

"The absence of ex-ante (before an event) analysis of the economic costs associated with a decision is further exacerbated when judicial activism by courts and tri-

bunals is also in play."

Vikrant Tongad, Uttar Pradesh-based environmentalist and founder, Social Action for Forest and Environment (SAFE) was among those whom CUTS reached out to, as an expert, because of his involvement in campaigns against sandmining operations. He told *The Hindu* that he found the study "surprising" in its intent. "Does the government now want to train judges not to give such judgements? Is the government forgetting that due to their negligence, courts have been forced to give strict orders. Will the NITI Aayog also study how much damage will be done if the courts do not give such orders," he asked.

Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog Rajiv Kumar said the study was a purely economic exercise.

"The intent of this study is to analyse the cost and benefit of certain judicial decisions. It doesn't question judicial intervention. I was, for example, happy to see how Supreme Court's intervention led to the adoption of CNG (compressed natural gas, in transport vehicles in Delhi) and the economic benefits from it."

PM lauds judiciary for safeguarding rights

Stressing that the Gujarat High Court had always stood for the independence of the judiciary and respected the principle of separation of powers, Justice Shah said, "Even in the dark days of Emergency, judges of this court stood for the protection of human rights and in-

dependence of the judiciary."

Apart from highlighting the role of technology in delivering justice during the pandemic, Mr. Prasad reiterated the government's commitment towards independence of judiciary as "total and absolute".

FSSAI caps trans fats in food products

Trans-fatty acids are created in an industrial process that adds hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid, increase shelf life of food items and for use as an adulterant as they are cheap.

They are present in baked, fried and processed foods as well as adulterated ghee, which becomes solid at room temperature.

They are the most harmful form of fats as they clog arteries and cause hypertension, heart attacks and

other cardiovascular diseases.

The WHO has called for the elimination of industrially produced trans-fatty acids from the global food supply by 2023.

"The latest amendments to FSSAI rules signal the completion of the process of regulating trans fats in India. The move will make a big difference to the health harm caused by this unwanted ingredient," said Ashim Sanyal, COO of Consumer Voice.

Cong. moots law to protect Sabarimala customs

Draft envisages jail term for those violating the sanctity of the shrine

G. ANAND
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Congress on Saturday appeared to stonewall a bid by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] to relegate the Sabarimala issue to the backburner.

Former Kerala Home Minister and Congress leader Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan revealed an initial draft of the law that sought to protect the "religious rights and customs" of Ayyappa devotees if the Congress is voted to power. He said Sabarimala was an election issue. "The CPI(M)'s bid to dodge discussion on the subject would not pass muster with the voters. The CPI(M) should spell out whether it opposed the Bill," he added.

In a verdict in September 2018, the Supreme Court allowed women of all age

groups to enter the Ayyappa temple. The State has seen numerous protests against allowing such entry.

The Congress move seemed a counter to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's attempt to throw water on the party's gambit to revive the Sabarimala issue to draw Hindu votes.

Mr. Vijayan had said Sabarimala was not a talking point presently. The Supreme Court was reviewing the matter. The government "will discuss with everybody" and calibrate its position once the court delivered its verdict, he said.

The Congress's draft law states that the Devaswom Board will ensure that worship at the temple strictly adheres to the established tradition, "notwithstanding anything contained in any



Poll issue: The Congress says the ruling CPI(M) has been trying to dodge discussion on the Sabarimala issue.

judgment, decree or order".

The Bill proposes to allow only devotees who have complied with temple tradition to enter its precincts. It describes "Ayyappa devotees" as persons who follow the "Ayyappa Dharma". They include only women aged below 10 and above 50 (Malikappuram). It describes "Ayyappans and Malikappurams" as those who have earned the right to enter the temple by observing a 41-day

fast, marked by celibacy, spartan vegetarian diet, and sobriety.

The Devaswom Board, in consultation with the Tantri, will ban the entry of persons who do not adhere to the Ayyappa Dharma and, hence, might unsettle the "purity, serenity and sacred nature" of the temple. It also envisages imprisonment of not less than three months and up to two years to those who violate the shrine's sanctity.

'Containment steps working in Kerala now'

C. MAYA
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The third round of serosurveillance conducted by the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) in three districts in Kerala in mid-December, as part of a national sero survey, has put the seropositivity rate (IgG positivity, indicative of silent, prior exposure to SARS-CoV-2) at the time at 11.6%.

This is a jump by 14.5 times from August, when the ICMR's second round of sero survey had indicated a seroprevalence of 0.8% in the State.

The sero survey was conducted in Ernakulam, Thrissur and Palakkad in December 2020.

The first round of the sero survey in May in the same districts had shown a seroprevalence of 0.33%, while the second round in August showed the seroprevalence to be 0.8%.

When compared to the national average, Kerala's seroprevalence (11.6%) as of December was just half that of the national average (21%). This shows the effectiveness of robust containment measures in the State, it is claimed.

However, the other side of the story is that if the seroprevalence at the national level went up by 3.1 times between August and December, in Kerala, this went up by 14.5 times during the same period.

Extrapolating, it can be seen that for every case officially diagnosed and detected, the State had missed only about six infections in the community.

Kerala fares extremely well if this is compared at the national level, wherein 30 infections were being missed for every case detected in December. This indicates the efficacy of the focussed testing strategy adopted by the State.

SEC confines A.P. Minister to home

Peddireddi accused of causing fear

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh State Election Commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar on Saturday asked the Director-General of Police (DGP) to confine Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy to his residential premises till the completion of the gram panchayat elections on February 21, on the ground that he had created fear in the minds of the electorate by making statements that amounted to interfering with the election process.

In his proceedings, Mr. Ramesh said the alleged threatening of District Collectors, district election authorities, and Returning Officers by the Minister was a serious breach of law and the tenets of the Constitution, and it was tantamount to subverting the democratic process of elections to the local bodies.

Charging the Minister with the abuse of his office for wrongful ends, the SEC



Minister Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy

said in his order to the DGP that if corrective steps were not taken immediately, the holding of free and fair elections would be in peril and in danger of being vitiated.

He stated that the restrictions imposed on the Minister were entirely preventive in nature, while denying access to the media, and that the Minister could go out to avail himself of medical services or meet other exigencies that warranted inevitable movement. He would have access to all official records and papers, the SEC said.



'Problematic move as case is pending before SC'

STAFF REPORTER
KOCHI

"The Supreme Court had held in its initial judgment that the exclusion of women for the specific reason of menstruation is violative of their fundamental rights," says Kaleeswaram Raj, advocate practising in the Supreme Court.

"Going by that logic which is still available, you cannot have legislation which goes against the judgment of the Constitution Bench. The judgment maintained that the practice has been violative, is of recent origin and goes against the tenets of gender justice, therefore it violates the equality clauses of the Constitution," he said.

"It could be a violation of

fundamental rights as ascertained by the SC in the initial judgment," he added.

Review awaited

"The initial judgment has not been reviewed and recalled. The matter is now pending before the Supreme Court and what the Constitution Bench had earlier said has not been strictly reviewed. That has only been adjourned for further adjudication, keeping it in abeyance. A legislative move at this juncture will be problematic since it is pertaining to something before the Supreme Court. It could constitute an intrusion into the ongoing adjudication process, and will be incompetent and vulnerable to challenge," he said.

Protests rock university in Kerala for the second day

Ruckus continues over appointment of ex-MP's wife

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The main campus of the Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit at Kalady in Kerala witnessed protests by the Congress's student wing for the second consecutive day on Saturday against the appointment of R. Ninitha, wife of M.B. Rajesh, former Palakkad MP of the CPI(M), as an assistant professor in the Department of Malayalam.

The day's protests began with activists affiliated to the Ernakulam district unit of the Kerala Students' Union (KSU) taking out a march to the main campus. The police had locked the gates leading to the administrative and academic blocks. The activists then climbed over the gates and rushed towards the office of Vice-Chancellor Dharmarajan P.K. raising slogans alleging irregularities and nepotism



The police stopping protesters from entering the office of the Vice-Chancellor at the university in Kalady on Saturday.

in the appointment. However, the police stopped them from entering the office.

KSU activists alleged that the Vice-Chancellor was protecting the interests of the CPI(M) by justifying Ms. Ninitha's appointment. They also accused the Left Democratic Front government of speeding up backdoor appointments of its well-wishers ahead of the Assembly election.

Ms. Ninitha's appointment had sparked a row after one of the subject experts took to social media on

Thursday, saying that "it was his first experience where the rank list had gone topsyturvy." Those who got the first two ranks were bypassed to choose Ms. Ninitha, he said. She was ranked first in the list of candidates in the Muslim category.

The Vice-Chancellor had denied the charge, saying the selection process was transparent.

CPI(M) State committee member and Ms. Ninitha's husband M.B. Rajesh alleged conspiracy by the three subject experts to favour a candidate known to them.

'Gen. Thimayya will continue to inspire'

President opens museum at Madikeri

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MYSURU

President Ram Nath Kovind, who inaugurated Gen. Thimayya Museum at Madikeri in Karnataka's Kodagu district on Saturday, said it commemorates the services and valour of one of the greatest soldiers of India.

General K.S. Thimayya served as the Chief of Army Staff from 1957 to 1961 and his ancestral house 'Sunny Side' has been renovated and



President Ram Nath Kovind and wife Savita at the Gen. Thimayya Museum in Madikeri. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

converted into a museum.

The museum showcases memorabilia, including weapons and military uniforms, and houses a battle tank at the entrance in addition

to a fighter jet, MiG 21, both of which were used in the 1971 war.

The President later wrote in the visitors' book: "General Thimayya Museum preserves special aspects of the

extraordinary character and contribution of one of the finest soldiers in the history of our army."

"The memorabilia at Sunny Side, once the residence of Gen. Thimayya, highlights the sterling features of our brave forces. District Kodagu has the honour of having enriched our armed forces with stalwarts like Gen. Thimayya and Field Marshal Cariappa. I am sure that the museum will inspire our youth to carry forward the legacy of Gen. Thimayya," the President remarked. Mr. Kovind also paid homage at the War Memorial which is on the premises.



Ghana President gets a taste of Malayali mobilisation

Trolls seek 'release' of legislator P.V. Anvar said to be in detention in the African country

ABDUL LATHEEF NAHA
MALAPPURAM

Republic of Ghana President Nana Akufo-Addo must be a puzzled man.

A large group of Malayalis has swarmed his Facebook page with comments in Malayalam and English sarcastically asking for the "release" of P.V. Anvar, MLA, from Ghana.

After commenting apologetically against Sachin Tendulkar on tennis star Maria Sharapova's page a couple of days ago, Malayali netizens proved yet again that they had few competitors and parallels in social media sarcasm and humour.

Mr. Anvar has been away for the past several weeks, and there were rumours that he was detained in Ghana, the West African country he visited in connection with his business.

Soon after Ghana President's February 2 post on the 'Composition of the Council of State' on FB, hundreds of Malayalis began commenting about Mr. Anvar. The post got 305 shares and 3,400 comments till Saturday evening.

A comment by Fazal Kavot read: "Mr. Nana Addo, kindly send back our great rainfall observer, Mr. and Dr. Anwar, MLA, to our nation.



Barrage of requests: A screenshot of Ghana President Nana Akufo-Addo's Facebook page.

He is the inventor of 'Japanese Clouds'."

The user was referring to an old comment by Mr. Anvar that "monsoon clouds

from Western Ghats travel to Japan and causes rain there".

Najad Palathingal commented: "Our scientist

from Kerala has been missing for a few days. We request you to find him as soon as possible." Another commenter, Sabith, went on to issue a "threat": "If he [P.V. Anvar] is not released soon, we are ready to organise a dharna in front of the Ghana Secretariat. As a first step, the Ghananian President's image will be burned in all cities of Kerala. Please don't underestimate the power of Kerala people."

But Mr. Anvar responded to the trolls in a jovial manner. Borrowing a Rajinikanth dialogue from Tamil movie *Basha*, Mr. Anvar said: "I will come late, but I will be the latest."

IN BRIEF



'Golden Chariot' to be back on track in March

MYSURU
Karnataka's luxury train Golden Chariot, which had gone off the rails for over three years, is set to chug again from March 14, after a complete makeover. The train will have WiFi-enabled cabins, new upholstery and renovated bathrooms. The service, which began in 2010, covers major tourist destinations.

Police record Sunny Leone's statement

KOCHI
The Ernakulam Crime Branch unit has recorded the statement of actor Sunny Leone on a petition filed by the coordinator of an event which she was supposed to attend in the district on Valentine's Day in 2019 but did not. Shiyas, the petitioner, accused the actor of cheating the organisers of ₹29 lakh, which was paid to her as fee. Ms. Leone's statement was recorded a couple of days ago at a movie location at Poovar.

MLA donates ₹3.16 crore to TTD for temple in T.N.

TIRUMALA
AIADMK MLA from Tamil Nadu and member of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Trust Board, R. Kumaraguru, on Saturday handed over documents for four acres of land and ₹3.16 crore to TTD Chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy for building a temple of Lord Venkateswara in his native Ulundurpet constituency.



Action-packed: (from left) Farmers protesting during the chakka jam call; blocking the Jalandhar-New Delhi National Highway; and volunteers at the Singhu border in New Delhi on Saturday.

Village groups coordinate chakka jam

Meticulous planning ensured participation of people at protest sites outside Delhi and elsewhere

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI
Protesting farmers at the Singhu border on Saturday said residents of their respective villages had participated in the chakka jam (road block) called by the farmers.

Teams and committees at the village level had been formed earlier to coordinate between those who were required to be present at the borders and those who would participate in the chakka jam, they said.

Patiala resident Manjeet Singh, who has been at the Singhu border since the protest began, said, "These days we are mostly staying at the borders on a rotational basis. Committees have been formed at the village level specially for coordination purposes - to decide which group is going to be at the



Strict vigil: Heavy security arrangements in place at the Singhu border in New Delhi on Saturday.

borders and for how long." "Similarly, for the chakka jam as well, it was decided as to who all will block the highways. Considering we are

here at the border, people from our village have participated in the three-hour blockade, in large numbers. From our village, tractors

and trolleys were used to protest on the Bhatinda-Chandigarh highway. Link roads were also shut during this period, according to the updates we received from those who participated," Mr. Singh said.

Several tractors and trolleys were also seen arriving at the Singhu border on Saturday, with groups of people joining the protest, even as the chakka jam was under way in other parts of the country.

Division of labour
Vikram Singh of Bathinda said, "I have been at the protest site since the first day. We have 25 to 30 trolleys from our village itself. The village pradhan is the one who is mostly coordinating and organising everything. People from our village have gone to the Bhatinda-



Protests were peaceful; no untoward incident was reported

Farmers block highways in Punjab and Haryana

Protests were peaceful; no untoward incident was reported

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Members of different farmer outfits in parts of Punjab and Haryana on Saturday blocked several national and State highways and squatted on roads between 12 p.m. and 3 p.m. as part of a programme against the Union government's three agriculture laws.

The protests, which saw the participation of elderly, women and youth, were peaceful and no untoward incident was reported. Slogans were raised against the Centre, demanding the repeal of the laws.

Roads in Patiala, Moga, Ferozepur, Fazilka, Barnala, Faridkot, Muktsar, Mansa, Bathinda and other districts were blocked, hampering



Loud and clear: Farmers shouting slogans as they block an expressway at Kundli in Haryana on Saturday.

traffic. Sukhdev Singh, general secretary of Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ugrahan), one of the largest farmers' outfit in Punjab, said that its members blocked roads in 13 districts.

Pandher said its members blocked roads at 57 places in Amritsar and Tarn Taran among other districts.

The protests were held on a call from the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, a joint front of farmer unions, which had been agitating against the farm laws.

NY State Assembly resolution calls for Kashmir American Day

It was sponsored by two Democratic Assemblymen

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

A resolution petitioning New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo to declare February 5 as Kashmir American Day was passed by the State's Legislative Assembly on February 3. The 5th is also observed in Pakistan as Kashmir Solidarity Day and a social media post from the Consulate of Pakistan in New York suggests the country had a role in promoting the resolution.

If the New York State Governor decides to recognise the day as suggested, it could potentially contribute to an understanding of the Kashmir issue that is out of kilter with the Indian government's positions and messaging.

The resolution, which was sponsored by two Democratic Assemblymen, Nader Sayegh and Nick Perry, says, "The Kashmiri community has overcome adversity, shown perseverance, and established themselves as one of the pillars of the



Andrew Cuomo

New York immigrant communities."

"Kashmiri people living around the world speak the Koshur language and practice their distinct and ancient rites of Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism; and in the recognition of their unique cultural identity and storied history, which has its roots in the Himalayan foothills and the Pir Panjal Range, helps to keep the Kashmiri identity alive," it says.

"The State of New York endeavours to champion human rights including the freedom of religion, movement, and expression for all

Kashmiri people, which are embedded within the United States Constitution, through the recognition of diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious identities," the resolution says.

The Consulate General of Pakistan posted a message of congratulations to the Assembly, Mr. Sayegh and the American Pakistani Advocacy Group on its Facebook page.

Following the government's reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir via a dilution of Article 370, and the restrictions instituted on August 5, 2019, the Kashmir issue has gained attention in the U.S. It was the main focus of a hearing organised by an Asia-focused committee of the U.S. House of Representatives in October 2019.

The Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Embassy in Washington did not comment on the development in New York when approached by The Hindu.

'Today's times can't be exaggerated as Emergency'

N. Ram recalls that during that period, there was total censorship and detention of journalists

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The present times should not be compared to the Emergency as there are still spaces where one can air strong opinions and fight repression, N. Ram, Director, The Hindu Group of Publications, said on Saturday.

He was speaking at a webinar organised by Live Law on "Criminalising journalism and cinema".

Mr. Ram said uneven implementation of law, and the higher judiciary, on more than one occasion, had failed to protect press freedom.

"The recent arrests and filing of criminal cases



against several journalists and also other creative persons, has exposed and widened the fault lines in our Constitution. There are many escape clauses in law which is aggravated by executive overreach and failure of the judiciary to adequately protect," he said.

"There was a time when, in terms of freedom of press, India was in an enviable position among the developing nations. But that was 40 years ago, we had just come out of the dark chapter of Emergency. Political scientist Robin Jeffrey, in a book dealing with the Indian lan-

guage press, called it India's newspaper revolution. Today, if I were to claim that we are in an enviable position, then I will be accused of spreading fake news," he said.

One must not fall into a temptation of exaggerating today's times as the Emergency. "I wouldn't say that this is like an Emergency. That would be a mistake. I have lived under Emergency, when there was total censorship, detention of journalists. Let's not rush out to conclusions. There are still spaces where you can express vigorous opinion, strong condemnation of the acts of the executive, criti-

cise the judiciary and so on," he noted.

'More sinister'
Senior Advocate Akhil Sibal said what was happening was far more sinister.

Mr. Sibal said, "We may not have reached the stage of Emergency, but we are definitely on the way. What we are seeing should be something which alarms us at a deeper level and we must not be dismissive about it as something which is just a temporary blip, but see it for what it is."

Screenwriter Jyoti Kapoor said that after the controversy over Tandav, screen writers were a vulnerable lot.

Hackers leak phone data of Army personnel in J&K

However, Bharti Airtel has denied any breach in its system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A hacker group has allegedly leaked data of Army personnel using the Bharti Airtel network in Jammu and Kashmir. However, the company has denied any breach in its system. The group, with the name of Red Rabbit Team, hacked some Indian websites and posted the data on the webpages of those portals. The hackers shared some links of those webpages on Twitter in a comment over a tweet of cybersecurity researcher Rajshekh Rajaharia and tagged several media organisations.

The query sent to the Indian Army did not elicit any reply but an Army official said, "We are not aware of any such information but it

appears to be malicious intent of some inimical elements."

When contacted, Bharti Airtel spokesperson denied any breach of its server. "We can confirm there is no hack or breach of any Airtel system as claimed by this group. Multiple stakeholders outside of Airtel have access to some data as per regulatory requirements. We have apprised all the relevant authorities of the matter to, therefore, investigate this and take appropriate action. This group has been in touch with our security team for over 15 months now and has made varying claims in addition to posting inaccurate data from one specific region," the spokesperson said.

The links shared by the hacker were initially accessible with mobile number, name and address of subscribers but stopped working after sometime.

Red Rabbit Team claimed that it has access to pan-Indian data of Bharti Airtel through a shell uploaded on the company's server and will leak more data soon.

Mr. Rajaharia said that hackers had failed to show any credible evidence of possessing pan-India data of Bharti Airtel and it is also unclear on the way they got subscriber's data.

Telecom operators are required to give access to government and law enforcement agencies of subscriber data registration (SDR) portal.

CRPF jawan injured in Srinagar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

A CRPF jawan was injured in an attack by militants in Srinagar on Saturday afternoon.

An official said the jawan suffered bullet injuries in a leg when militants opened fire on an installation of the 29 Battalion in Nowgam area.

The police said the area was immediately cordoned off to trace the attackers. No outfit has claimed responsibility for the attack.

The injured jawan, identified as Head Constable Manoj Kumar Yadav, was shifted to a hospital where his condition was stated to be stable, officials said.

Amid the development, the chief of a recently floated militant outfit was arrested in Jammu.

The police said Hidayatullah Malik, alias Hasnain, chief of Lashkar-e-Mustafa (LeM), believed to be a shadow organisation of the Jaish-e-Mohammad, was nabbed during an operation. Around 3.30 p.m., Malik attacked a search party and tried to escape from a spot. "The team, however, displayed exemplary discipline and apprehended him tactfully," the police said.

EMPLOYEES' STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION HOSPITAL PEENYA
WALK-IN INTERVIEW FOR THE YEAR 2021 FOR ENGAGEMENT OF MEDICAL OFFICERS (ON CONTRACT) ESIC HOSPITAL, PEENYA, BENGALURU

Government of Karnataka
KARNATAKA SECONDARY EDUCATION EXAMINATION BOARD
6th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru-560 003
Ph: 080-23349434 Fax: 23347670
No: B3/2021/Exam/P.A.P.08/2020-21 Date: 05.02.2021
SHORT-TERM e-TENDER NOTIFICATION
The Director, Examinations, Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board, hereby invites short-term e-tenders from eligible bidders for the "supply of pre-printed answer booklets with overprinting of variable serial number on the same pertaining to 2021 S.S.L.C main and supplementary examinations (Delivery of answer booklets under 'dedicated milk run route system') as per K.T.P.P. Act 1999 and K.T.P.P. Rules 2000, through e-procurement portal only. Tender document may be downloaded from www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in or www.sslc.karnataka.gov.in

WALK-IN INTERVIEW
MISHRA DHATU NIGAM LIMITED
(A Government of India Enterprise) (A Mini Ratna-I Company)
Regd. Office: P.O. Kanchanbagh, Hyderabad - 500 058
CONTRACT ENGAGEMENT NOTICE
WALK-IN SELECTION PROCESS ON 20.02.2021

MISHRA DHATU NIGAM LIMITED
(A Government of India Enterprise) (A Mini Ratna-I Company)
Regd. Office: P.O. Kanchanbagh, Hyderabad - 500 058
CONTRACT ENGAGEMENT NOTICE
WALK-IN SELECTION PROCESS ON 19.02.2021



IN BRIEF

Chidambaram questions delay in Faruqui's release

NEW DELHI
Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Saturday questioned why stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui had not been released from jail, more than 30 hours after the Supreme Court ordered his release. In a series of tweets, he asked if the delay was happening with or without the knowledge of the Madhya Pradesh CM.

Digvijaya flays M.P. govt. over attack on policeman

GWALIOR
A day after a police inspector was attacked allegedly by the sand mafia in M.P., Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Saturday blamed the BJP government, saying those involved in the illegal activity feel emboldened because they are "paying commission" to the legislators and Ministers. The BJP has dismissed the allegation.

Teen convicted for rape of cousin granted bail

MUMBAI
The Bombay High Court recently granted bail to a 19-year-old youth and suspended his 10-year sentence for raping his minor cousin. In its order, the court said, "Incidents of consensual sex between minors has been a grey area under the law as minor's consent is not valid in the eyes of law under Protection of Children from Sexual Offence Act (POCSO)".

Major reshuffle in Bengal police ahead of election

KOLKATA
In a major reshuffle of the top brass of the police, the West Bengal government on Saturday transferred 24 senior IPS officers, including Kolkata Police Commissioner Anuj Sharma, who was the Commissioner since mid-2019. He has been appointed as the Additional Director General, Criminal Investigation Department. Soumen Mitra will be the new Kolkata Commissioner.

'India now pharmacy of world'

Jaishankar says country has converted the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has said the Indian economy is poised to grow by about 11% despite the COVID-19 crisis.

"It is not only the pent-up demand that is set to rebound but there is also the prospect of new growth in the post-COVID-19 era as per the Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy for FY 2021-22," Mr. Jaishankar told presspersons at the BJP State office here on Saturday.

On the stand-off in Eastern Ladakh, Mr. Jaishankar said military commanders of India and China had held nine rounds of negotiations to ease tensions following an agreement on the disengagement of troops.

'Progress made'

"I believe some progress has been made but there is no visible expression of that on



While according priority to the infrastructure, manufacturing and health-care sectors, efforts are on to increase investments in the agriculture sector and giving the much-needed push to liquidity, productivity, and credit flow where needed

S. JAISHANKAR
External Affairs Minister

the ground. But talks will continue," he said.

"While according priority to the infrastructure, manufacturing and health-care sectors, efforts are on to increase investments in the agriculture sector and giving the much-needed push to liquidity, productivity, and credit flow where needed," the Minister said.

Bad banks would take care of the non-performing assets that pushed some banks into an existential crisis, he said.

By converting the crisis into an opportunity, he said, India became the "pharmacy of the world" by supplying medicines such as paracetamol and hydroxychloroquine to countries across the globe.

Besides, the number of manufacturers of ventilators had increased to 25 and there were 16,000 COVID treatment centres. Thousands of industrial units were making masks

and personal protection equipment.

Meeting in Moscow

Mr. Jaishankar said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had met his Chinese counterpart in Moscow last year and he had interactions with top Chinese Foreign Ministry officials too.

It was then resolved to disengage in some areas but since it is a complicated process, it might take some more time for things to fructify, he suggested.

On the regime change in Washington and its implications, Mr. Jaishankar said Mr. Modi had earned a lot of respect in the U.S. since his visit to that country when Barack Obama was the President, Joe Biden the Vice-President and Antony Blinken the Deputy Secretary of State. "We still have an appeal and relationships that transcend politics," he added.

Mamata roadblock to development: Nadda

BJP president flags off 'Parivartan Yatra'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

BJP president J.P. Nadda on Saturday accused the Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal of creating roadblocks to development.

He was addressing a gathering at Nabadwip in Nadia district after flagging off the "Parivartan Yatra" of the party.

"Your government will go. The Trinamool will be defeated. Lotus will bloom here. Bengal will join the mainstream... This is what the 'Parivartan Yatra' is all about," he said.

With just a few months to go for the Assembly election, the yatra, using a bus converted into a "rath" (cha-



Flagging off: J.P. Nadda with other BJP leaders during the inauguration of party's Poriborton Yatra, at Nawadwip in West Bengal's Nadia on Saturday. •PTI

riot), is a major programme by the BJP to reach far-flung areas of the State.

Mr. Nadda said the "yatra" would start from five places

in the State. Union Home Minister Amit Shah would flag off two of them. Raising the slogan "Anek hoyeche Mamata, Paribartan chaiche

janata (Enough of Mamata, people want change)", he alleged that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had been standing in the way of deve-

lopment like a roadblock.

"We want to awaken the people of the State through the 'yatra'. But I think they have already been awakened. They have decided to remove the Trinamool government. Wherever I went, I saw tremendous support for the BJP," he said.

Earlier in the day, he visited the Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture in Malda district and participated in a roadshow. He also had lunch with farmers.

Mr. Nadda, in both his public speeches, highlighted the issue of denial of benefits of the PM Kisan Scheme to the State farmers.

"Every farmer in the State would have got ₹14,000. About 70 lakh farmers have been denied of the benefit because of Mamata ji politics of "chholbe na" (non-cooperation)," he said.

Delhi opts to wait, watch U.S. foreign policy shift

President Biden's speech last week focussed on threats from China, Russia but made no mention of India or Indo-Pacific

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

U.S. President Joseph Biden's 20-minute speech at the State Department last week contained many themes for the new administration's foreign policy agenda, including a return to traditional alliances, a push back to what he called "advancing authoritarianism" and a harsh spotlight on Russia and China on the issues of human rights violations and other challenges they pose to the United States.

But he left some of those in New Delhi watching the

speech closely, guessing about the future of U.S.-India ties and Washington's engagement with the region.

Conspicuous silence

"It is noteworthy that Mr. Biden did not refer to India, Indo-Pacific, South China Sea or the Quad," said former Ambassador Vishnu Prakash, also making the point that the U.S. President had dealt with China while giving primacy to "economic, IPR and human right aspects, instead of the security concerns resulting from the aggressive Chinese posture".



Joe Biden

In his speech, President Biden made five references to China, which he called the U.S.'s "most serious competitor", and eight references to

Russia, which he referred to as a threat that is "determined to damage democracy" in the U.S. He said Washington would engage both countries if it served U.S. national interests.

"India and South Asia are not a priority for the Biden administration, given the

NEWS ANALYSIS

need to address stark domestic challenges and the urgent requirement, to first, reassure United States' allies in Europe and northeast Asia," said Rudra Chaudhuri, Direc-

tor of Carnegie India.

Experts also pointed out that Mr. Biden's lack of reference to India, and the fact that he has not so far called Prime Minister Narendra Modi since taking office, has been more than made up by calls last week from his Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and Secretary of State Anthony Blinken to their Indian counterparts.

The other guessing game in Delhi is over whether the Biden administration will slap sanctions on India when

it takes delivery of the Russian S-400 missile system, under its Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

This week, U.S. Charge d'Affaires Don Heflin had said that there was no waiver for India from the sanctions at present.

For the moment, New Delhi appears to be playing down any concerns over U.S. foreign policy agenda, with officials prepared to "wait and watch", and not ruffle any feathers while the Biden administration deals with other preoccupations first.

SUDOKU

2				4		1		
	5	9		6			3	
		4			2		5	
					5			7
5		1				9		2
6			9					
	3		1			6		
	6			8		5	9	
		5		3				1

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

8	9	5	1	6	7	3	4	2
2	4	7	8	5	3	1	6	9
3	1	6	4	2	9	5	8	7
6	3	9	5	4	2	7	1	8
1	5	2	7	8	6	9	3	4
4	7	8	3	9	1	2	5	6
9	8	4	2	3	5	6	7	1
5	2	1	6	7	8	4	9	3
7	6	3	9	1	4	8	2	5

Ka-226T to be 33% indigenous: HAL

'Deal held up owing to a shortfall in Russian proposal for indigenous content'

DINAKAR PERI
BENGALURU

The total indigenous content of the Ka-226T utility helicopters, to be jointly manufactured locally by India and Russia with Transfer of Technology (ToT), is between 27%-33%, said Chairman and MD of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) R. Madhavan. The final deal is held up as the Russian proposal of 62% indigenous content in assembled helicopters falls short of the tender requirement of 70%.

"In Ka-226T when we talk of 70% indigenous content, it is not the same as the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) 52%. The 70% is of the Russian content. Engine from Safran and avionics from other countries are not accounted for in this. Balance is what we are looking and from there 70% is taken. Taking the whole helicopter, the indigenous content is about 27-33%," he said in response to a question from *The Hindu*



New and improved: The Ka-226T is meant to replace the ageing and obsolete Cheetah and Chetak fleet. • FILE PHOTO

at Aero India.

Russians were unable to offer 70% of this and they offered up to 62%; that too only in Phase-4 of production, he stated.

Defence Ministry is also asking for better split of indigenous production from Phase-2 onwards and increasing it to 70% by including more items, Mr. Madhavan said, adding that the items are being identified for

including in the Transfer of Technology to bring the indigenous content up to 70%.

The Ka-226T is meant to replace the ageing and obsolete Cheetah and Chetak fleet of the Army and Air Force and the total technical life of these will start finishing from 2023 onwards.

As per the Russian proposal, the localisation plan would be spread over four phases, beginning with 3.3%

indigenisation for 35 helicopters, going up to 15% for next 25 helicopters, 35% for 30 helicopters in Phase 3 and eventually to 62.4% indigenisation in Phase 4 for the last 50 helicopters. The helicopters would be manufactured by India Russia Helicopters Limited (IRHL) – a joint venture between HAL and Russian Helicopters.

As reported by *The Hindu* last December, faced with an urgent need for utility helicopters, the Army is preparing to approach the Defence Ministry for a waiver on the indigenous content. In 2015, India and Russia had concluded an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for at least 200 Ka-226T twin engine utility helicopters estimated to cost over \$1 billion with 60 helicopters to be directly imported and remaining 140 manufactured locally. The first helicopter would be delivered within 36 months from the signing of the contract.

Campaign trail: Nirmala Sitharaman addresses a public rally in Guwahati on Saturday. • RITU RAJ KONWAR



Both vaccines approved in India are to be given 28 days apart, according to the rules governing their dosage.

In the U.S., the two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine are recommended to be given 21 days apart. And for the Moderna vaccine, the interval is 28 days.

In the U.K., the AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines are

allowed to be given 12 weeks apart (though 21 days is the recommended interval) to ensure more people get at least one shot.

As of Saturday, India has inoculated 5.6 million, which includes 5.2 million healthcare workers and 3,70,693 frontline workers, for whom vaccination began this week. There have been 22 deaths reported so far following vaccination. However, none of the deaths have been ruled as being due to the jabs.

Scope for improvement

Mr. Bhushan urged States and Union Territories to "exponentially increase" the pace of vaccination and that there remained "substantial scope for improvement" in the number of average vaccinations per session.

MP dares Suvendu to contest from Nandigram

Mamata is contesting the seat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Taking the fight against Suvendu Adhikari to his constituency, Nandigram, Trinamool Congress MP Abishek Banerjee on Saturday dubbed his former party colleague who joined the BJP two months ago as a "traitor" and "Mir Jafar", and dared him to contest against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee from the constituency.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced last month that she would contest from Nandigram, weeks after Mr. Adhikari, a prominent Trinamool leader, joined the BJP. After her announcement, Mr. Adhikari promised to defeat her with a margin of 50,000 votes but did not specify whether he wants to contest from the seat or not.

"He [Suvendu Adhikari] should say he wants to contest from Nandigram... He wants to make a fool of someone by making that person contest from Nandigram against our leader and is trying to save himself from a humiliating defeat,"



Abishek Banerjee

Mr. Banerjee said.

The MP, who was addressing a gathering in Purba Medinipur after almost six years, accused Mr. Adhikari of joining those who attacked the bust of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, who hailed from Purba Medinipur, in Kolkata in 2019. The bust was vandalised during Union Home Minister Amit Shah's roadshow in Kolkata during the 2019 Lok Sabha election. "The people of Purba Medinipur will never side with the traitors who have tainted the soil of the district," Mr. Banerjee said.

As the polls approach, the war of words between Mr. Adhikari and Mr. Banerjee is getting shriller.

BJP-led govt. gifts cash to Assam tea workers

Sop comes ahead of Assembly polls



Campaign trail: Nirmala Sitharaman addresses a public rally in Guwahati on Saturday. • RITU RAJ KONWAR

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Eye on the Assembly election, the Bharatiya Janata Party-led alliance government in Assam doled out cash to more than 7 lakh tea plantation workers on Saturday.

Tea plantation workers, referred to as "tea tribes" with roots in Central India, are a potent electoral force in 45 of the 126 Assembly constituencies spread across the tea-growing belts of eastern, central and southern Assam.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presided over the "Cha Bagichar Dhan Puraskar Mela" (fair for gifting wealth to tea garden workers) in Guwahati. The event entailed transferring ₹3,000 each to the bank accounts of 7,46,667 tea workers. This was the third such

cash transfer after two instalments of ₹2,500 earlier. The Assam government has so far spent ₹584 crore under the scheme.

Addressing thousands of tea workers, Ms. Sitharaman said they were the beneficiaries of several schemes today because Prime Minister Narendra Modi had been thinking about them before the 2014 Lok Sabha polls.

"The tea workers now enjoy digital facilities anyone in the metros does. You are directly getting money. There are no middlemen. This is the benefit of digitalisation," she said.

Ms. Sitharaman added that the initiatives of the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in the State had led to the opening of bank accounts, mobile banking, and installation of ATMs in tea gardens.

U.S., China spar as diplomats hold talks

Blinken stresses human rights and democratic values; Yang Jiechi asks America to ‘rectify its mistakes’

ANANTH KRISHNAN

The United States and China on Saturday exchanged sharp messages in the highest-level interaction between the two sides following a new administration taking charge in Washington, in a suggestion that a recently confrontational relationship was likely to see more continuity than change.

In a telephone call between new Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the top Chinese foreign policy official Yang Jiechi, who is a member of the Communist Party of China's Politburo and Director of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission, the Biden administration conveyed a strong message to China on human rights and security in the Indo-Pacific, while China, for its part, blamed the U.S. for recent tensions by calling on Washington “to rectify its mistakes”.

“Secretary Blinken stressed the United States will continue to stand up for human rights and democratic values, including in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong, and pressed China to join the



Tough stand: Antony Blinken addressing staff at the U.S. State Department as Joe Biden looks on, in this file photo. **• AFP**

international community in condemning the military coup in Burma,” State Department spokesperson Ned Price said. “The Secretary reaffirmed that the United States will work together with its allies and partners in defence of our shared values and interests to hold the PRC accountable for its efforts to threaten stability in the Indo-Pacific, including across the Taiwan Strait, and its undermining of the rules-based international system.”

Mr. Blinken and India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar spoke last week, and the Secretary of State, in

their January 29 call, had “underscored India's role as a pre-eminent U.S. partner in the Indo-Pacific and the importance of working together to expand regional cooperation, including through the Quad”.

Constructive role

The Chinese readout of Saturday's call said Mr. Yang had “urged the U.S. side to play a constructive role in promoting peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region”. China does not use the term Indo-Pacific.

On the military coup in Myanmar, he underlined the

position of Beijing, which has been opposed to the imposition of sanctions and has so far refrained from criticising the military leadership, that “the international community should create an enabling external environment for the proper settlement of the Myanmar issue”.

Mr. Yang said China-U.S. relations “stand at a key moment” and “the two sides should respect each other's core interests and choices of political system and development path, and manage their domestic affairs well,” the official Xinhua news agency said.

He “urged the U.S. to rectify its mistakes made over a period of time and work with China to uphold the spirit of no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation, focus on cooperation and manage differences, so as to push forward the healthy and stable development of bilateral relations”.

“China will unswervingly follow its path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and no force could stop the realisation of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese na-

tion,” Mr. Yang said, adding that “the Taiwan question, the most important and sensitive core issue in China-U.S. relations, bears on China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.” He called on the U.S. to “strictly abide by the one-China principle” and said, “Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet-related affairs are all China's internal affairs and allow no interference by any external forces.”

Sovereignty and security

“Any attempt to slander and smear China will not succeed, and China will continue to firmly safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests,” he said, adding that “all countries in the world should safeguard the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order based on international law, and the basic norms of international relations in line with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter” which was “the consensus of the international community, not the so-called rules-based international order championed by a few countries.”

Blinken makes call to Saudi Foreign Minister

Riyadh keen to cooperate with U.S. to uphold ‘security and stability’ in the region, says Bin Farhan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE RIYADH

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed “common challenges” faced by Washington and Riyadh in his first phone call with Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan, state media said on Saturday.

Mr. Bin Farhan congratulated Mr. Blinken on his appointment and said Riyadh

looked forward to working with Washington, said the official Saudi Press Agency.

The kingdom was keen to cooperate with President Joe Biden's administration to uphold “security and stability” in the region, it said.

Mr. Blinken and Mr. bin Farhan also discussed the “historical and strategic relations” between the two countries, the agency added.

The reported phone call comes after Mr. Biden announced on Thursday he was ending U.S. support for Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, where it has been involved since 2015 to shore up the government against the Iran-backed Houthi rebels.

Mr. Biden also said his administration would end all support, including arms sales for Saudi Arabia in the

war that has brought impoverished Yemen to its knees.

He also appointed veteran diplomat Timothy Lenderking, who has wide knowledge of the region, as U.S. special envoy for Yemen.

Saudi Arabia reacted to Mr. Biden's decisions by welcoming his “commitment to cooperate with the kingdom to defend its sovereignty and counter threats against it,”

the agency said.

State department spokesman Ned Price has noted that Mr. Biden made clear the U.S. still supported Saudi Arabia outside the Yemen war.

In ending support for the Saudi war in Yemen, Mr. Biden was fulfilling a campaign promise to activists who have been horrified by the suffering.

U.S. moves to end terror designation of Houthis

It reverses Pompeo's decision last month

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE DUBAI

The U.S. has moved to delist Yemen's Houthi rebels as a terrorist organisation, removing a block that humanitarian groups said jeopardised crucial aid as the country's warring sides cautiously welcomed a push for peace by President Joe Biden.

The grinding six-year war in Yemen has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions, triggering what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian disaster. Nearly 80% of Yemen's population need some form of aid for survival, says UN.

A State Department spokesperson said on Friday they had “formally notified Congress” of Secretary of State Antony Blinken's intent to revoke the terrorist designations.

The move comes a day after Mr. Biden announced an end to U.S. support for the

Saudi-led offensive operations in Yemen.

“This decision has nothing to do with our view of the Houthis and their reprehensible conduct, including attacks against civilians and the kidnapping of American citizens,” the spokesperson said.

Humanitarian view

“Our action is due entirely to the humanitarian consequences of this last-minute designation from the prior administration,” they said, adding the U.S. remained committed to helping Saudi Arabia defend its territory against attacks by the rebels.

Mr. Blinken's predecessor Mike Pompeo announced the designation days before leaving office last month, pointing to the Houthis' links to Iran and a deadly attack on the airport in Yemen's second city of Aden in December.

Sri Lanka settles \$400 mn currency swap with India

Amid speculation, central bank clarifies the development is not linked to the Colombo corridor deal

MEERA SRINIVASAN COLOMBO

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) settled a \$400 million currency swap facility from the Reserve Bank (RBI) of India last week, meeting the terms that the two countries had agreed upon.

The update sparked speculation in local media that India may have “abruptly terminated” the agreement, following Colombo's decision to pull out of a 2019 agreement to develop a Colombo Port terminal jointly with India and Japan.

However, both countries clarified that the developments were not linked. “The CBSL settled its swap facility with [the] Reserve Bank of India as scheduled. There was no special request from India for a premature settlement as erroneously reported by certain media outlets. Discussions on future collaboration continue,” the CBSL said in a tweet on Friday.

“The two countries had

agreed on the date earlier, this scheduled repayment has nothing to do with the ECT decision,” Sri Lanka's State Minister of Money and Capital Market and State Enterprise Reforms Ajith Nivard Cabraal told *The Hindu*.

Pandemic impact

The CBSL obtained the swap facility on July 31, 2020, for an initial period of three months, to cope with the severe economic impact of the pandemic. Subsequently, the RBI provided a three-month rollover at CBSL's request, until February 1, 2021. “Further extension would require Sri Lanka having a successfully negotiated staff level agreement for an IMF programme, which Sri Lanka does not have at present,” a spokesman of the Indian High Commission said.

“It is reiterated that India abides by all of its international and bilateral commitments in letter and spirit,” he added, days after India



Ajith Nivard Cabraal

urged the Sri Lankan leadership to adhere to Colombo's commitments on the ECT.

Foreign reserves

COVID-19 struck Sri Lanka in March 2020, putting its foreign reserves under strain since, as tourism, worker remittances and exports were badly hit. Sri Lanka's looming foreign debt obligations – \$6.8 billion this year – and fall in gross official reserves to \$5.6 billion as of Decem-

ber 31, 2020, according to Central Bank Data, foretell another challenging year.

However, the Rajapaksa administration has said it will not seek an IMF bailout. Colombo has instead sought further loans from China, among others, and additional currency swap facilities from both India and China. Neither China nor India has responded to Colombo's debt freeze request. Sri Lanka owes over \$5 billion to China and \$960 million to India in debt repayment.

Secretary to the Treasury S.R. Attygalle said Sri Lanka expects the \$1.5 billion swap facility from China to come through soon. “The [bilateral] negotiations are nearly over, only the final paperwork is pending. We should be able to complete that by the end of this month,” he told *The Hindu* on Saturday.

The currency swap is only one of at least three requests Colombo has made to Beijing since the pandem-

ic. Following approval of a \$500 million loan from China in March 2020, the Sri Lankan government has sought an additional \$700 million loan, in addition to applying for another ‘COVID-19 Emergency and Crisis Response Facility’, to the tune of \$180 million, from the Beijing-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). “The negotiations are proceeding well,” a Chinese Embassy spokesman told *The Hindu*.

Meanwhile, amid questions over whether New Delhi would clear Colombo's \$1 billion swap line request, in the wake of the ECT deal falling through, an Indian official source said, “the request is under consideration”. State Minister Cabraal said: “Negotiations are going on, but even if India decides not to offer it, we will understand. The Indian Economy is also under grave pressure due to the pandemic, you see,” he told *The Hindu*.

Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation
राजस्थान कौशल एवं आजीविका विकास निगम
A Government of Rajasthan Enterprise

1.Notice Inviting Request for Proposal
RFP No: RFP No: RSLDC/Services (SANKALP)/4Cr/OCB/2020/16 Date- 03.02.2020
Managing Director, Rajasthan Skills & Livelihoods Development Corporation (RSLDC)
Dept. of Skill, Govt. of Rajasthan, invites proposals (**Single Bid Two Envelope System**) from reputed and experienced Agencies for **Selection of Project Management Unit (PMU) by Rajasthan Skills & Livelihoods Development Corporation (RSLDC) for effective Implementation and Monitoring of SANKALP Scheme in Rajasthan through deployment of Human Resources at State as well as at District levels.**
The Proposal has to be submitted through online mode on <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> and can be searched by clicking the Tab “Bid Free View” on home page of above website and then going to Live Bid/ Hot Bid by searching Department Name as “RSLDC”
Raj.Samwak/C/209508 Managing Director

HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project - II
ICERS Cell, (Loan No.8499-IN)
Tender Reference: IN-TNRSF-SDC-RSIW-3-RFB

Invitation for Bid National Competitive Bidding (Through e-Procurement)
1. The Superintending Engineer (H), ICERS Cell on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu invites bids for “Road Safety Improvement Works in Safe Demonstration Corridor (SDC 03): Tiruvathipuram – Arni Road MDR 505 (km 0/000 – 30/400)”
2. The bid document will be available online from 08.02.2021 at 15:00 hours (IST) and should be submitted online in the [website www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in)
3. Kindly refer the Request for Bids (RFB) uploaded as part of Bid Document in www.tntenders.gov.in for details. Any clarification and amendment will only be published in the website.
4. Online Pre bid meeting will be held on 17.02.2021 at 12:30 hours (IST) (Refer RFB for more details)
5. Deadline for online submission of Bids: on or before 15:00 hours (IST) on 03.03.2021.
6. Date of online Bid opening: at 15:30 hours (IST) on 10.03.2021.
Superintending Engineer (H), ICERS Cell,
O/o the Director General, Highways Department,
HRS Campus, Sardar Patel Road, Guindy, Chennai – 600 025.
Ph: +91 – 44 – 22351066, E-mail: tnrcerscell@gmail.com
DIPR/871/TENDER/2021

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, Road Infrastructures-East Division,
#208, 2nd Floor, New Building, N.R. Square, Bengaluru-560 002.
No: EE/RI/East/TEND/06/2020-21 Date: 06.02.2021

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDERS (IFT)
(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)
The Executive Engineer, Road Infrastructure (East Division) invites tenders on behalf of the Commissioner, BBMP, Bengaluru from eligible Contractors for the work detailed in the table below.

Name of the Work	Amount Put to Tender (₹. in Lakhs)	EMD (₹. in Lakhs)
Resurfacing of Bad Reaches and Damaged Stretches of Arterial and Sub Arterial in CV Ramannagara, Shivajinagara & Shanthinagara Constituency in RI-East Division for the Year 2020-21.	124.00	EMD Declaration Form

Calendar of Events : (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from the e-procurement portal of the Government of Karnataka from **08.02.2021**. (2) Tenders must be submitted online through e-procurement portal on or before: **22.02.2021** upto 4:30 pm. (3) Pre Tender meeting will be held on **12.02.2021** at 4:00 pm in the Office of the Chief Engineer, Road Infrastructure, 4th Floor, Annex Building-3, BBMP Officers, Bengaluru - 02. (4) Technical Bids will be opened in the office of the Executive Engineer-Road Infrastructure - East Division on **25.02.2021** after 11:00 am. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or from website: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> Sd/- Executive Engineer, Road Infrastructures - East Division
STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.
Wear Mask 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing Maintain Hand Hygiene

Trump should not get intel briefings: Biden

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE WASHINGTON

U.S. President Joe Biden said on Friday that his predecessor Donald Trump, who is awaiting a Senate impeachment trial on charges of inciting an attack on the US Capitol, should not receive classified intelligence briefings, as is customary for former presidents.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU - PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
BUILDING ORGANIZATION - OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, PWD, BUILDINGS (CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE) CIRCLE, SALEM - 7.
PRE-QUALIFICATION APPLICATION AND PRICE TENDER - FORM OF CONTRACT: LUMPsum (TWO COVER SYSTEM)
TENDER NOTICE No.32/2020-2021/SE/IC&M/C&M/SLM, Dated: 05.02.2021
For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, the Superintending Engineer, PWD, Buildings (Construction and Maintenance) Circle, Salem - 7 invites tender for the following works, at this office upto 3.00PM, on 18.03.2021 in two sealed covers containing (i) Qualification details and EMD in a separate inner cover and (ii) Price Tender Schedule in another sealed cover and put into one common sealed cover from the experienced and competent contractors / firms as detailed below. The tender schedule can be downloaded at free of cost from the Govt. designated website (viz) <http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in>. The tender schedule will also be available in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD, Buildings (C&M) Circle, Salem-7, from 15.02.2021 to 17.03.2021 upto 5.45 pm. The tenders received will be opened at 3.30 P.M. on 18.03.2021, in the presence of the tenders or their representatives who choose to be present at that time.

Sl. No	Name of Work	Approximate value of work including G.S.T. (Rs. in Lakhs)	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit in Rupees	Period of Completion
1.	Construction of Hostel building for MBC College Boys (100 students) at Kumarapalayam in Namakkal District.	205.00	1,12,500	12 Months
2.	Construction of Own building with driving testing track for Regional Transport Office at Namakkal (South) in Namakkal District.	375.00	1,97,500	12 Months

Contractor class : Registered in Class I in State level / This Circle level (Rs.75.00 lakhs and above)

EMD to be credited : The Executive Engineer, P.W.D., Buildings (C&M) Division, Namakkal.

Cost of tender schedule : Document cost: Rs. 15000/- (+) G.S.T. 12%; Rs. 18000/- (Each Works)

Tender documents, are available in the following website and can also be downloaded at free of cost: www.tenders.tn.gov.in. Any other details can be had from the Office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD, Buildings (Construction and Maintenance) Circle, Salem-7, during working hours. Any changes in tender condition will also be published in website www.tenders.tn.gov.in.

Superintending Engineer, P.W.D., (I/C) Buildings (C&M) Circle, Salem-7.
DIPR/875/TENDER/2021

Punjab & Sind Bank net loss widens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI
Punjab & Sind Bank on Saturday said its net loss in the December quarter spiralled to ₹2,375.53 crore on higher provisions for bad loans.

The lender had posted a net loss of ₹255.49 crore in the same period a year earlier. In September quarter also, the bank had a loss of ₹401.27 crore. Total income also fell to ₹1,982.52 crore from ₹2,077.01 crore in the same period of 2019-20, the bank said in a filing. Net income fell 9.1% to ₹1,763.10 crore and income on investments was down 12.1% to ₹455.42 crore. Gross NPAs remained high at 13.1% of the gross advances as of December 31, 2020, compared with 13.6% in the year earlier.

JK Cement Q3 net rises 75% to ₹217.3 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI
JK Cement Ltd. on Saturday reported an increase of 74.8% in its consolidated net profit to ₹217.28 crore for the third quarter ended December 2020.

The company had posted a profit of ₹124.29 crore in the October-December period a year earlier, JK Cement said in a regulatory filing. Revenue from operations was up 24.52% at ₹1,832.71 crore during the quarter under review as against ₹1,471.78 crore in the year-earlier period. The company's total expenses were at ₹1,526.25 crore, up 15.73%, as against ₹1,318.80 crore of Q3 FY 2019-20.

Buffeted by Centre and State, GM threatens legal action

A year after announcing plans to sell its Talegaon plant, automaker rejects Maharashtra government's order to continue operations

LALATENDU MISHRA
SUHASINI HAIDAR
MUMBAI/DELHI
Squeezed between the Centre's decision to clamp down on the proposed sale of its car manufacturing and export plant to a Chinese company, and the Maharashtra State government's restrictions on shutting down the plant, American auto major General Motors has threatened to pursue legal options against the government. More than a year since GM agreed to sell its factory in Talegaon to China's Great Wall Motors (GWM) and six months after it applied for special permission under the government's new 'Chinese-FDI rules', the company is yet to receive clearances. Meanwhile, the Maharashtra government has rejected the company's application for

permanent closure of the plant which ceased production from December 24, 2020, and has instructed the company to keep it running and pay the staff as usual. In 2017 the plant had 2,500 employees. **Rock and a hard place** "Effectively, the State's decision amounts to a requirement that GM either produce vehicles for which there are no customer orders, or pay workers indefinitely for doing no work," George Svigos, General Motors' Director of Communications (International Markets) told *The Hindu*, in a written response from the company's headquarters in Detroit. "We reject both suggestions. We will move for the reversal of the order as soon as possible and firmly believe the law is



Final closure: Mr. Svigos says production has ceased at GM's Talegaon site and there won't be future output there. • REUTERS

on our side," he added. Hardening its position in the face of the double-clinch from the governments in New Delhi and Mumbai, GM says it sees absolutely no "scenario in

which it would reinvest in the site". "GM's plan is unchanged. GM production has ceased at the Talegaon site and there will be no future GM produc-

tion at the site," Mr. Svigos wrote, adding that it is completing "all wind-down work" after which the site will be dormant. He said GM's current offered package was well in excess of the legal minimum of 15 days per year of service, and asserted that the union, which moved the court, was refusing to negotiate a settlement. **Clouds from LAC** The plans for General Motors to exit from India ran into trouble last year after tensions at the Line of Actual Control between India and China rose over the Chinese PLA's aggressive incursions into Ladakh, which led to new restrictions on "neighbourhood investment". GM applied for permission to sell the Talegaon plant to GWM's wholly owned subsidi-

diary, Billion Sunny Development of Hong Kong, filing an application on July 9, which was forwarded to the ministries of external affairs and home affairs, as also the Reserve Bank of India, for clearances on July 13. While none of the departments concerned has commented on the issue, sources confirmed to *The Hindu* that GM has not received any clearances thus far, nor has the government given clearance to any of the companies that have applied in the Chinese-FDI category. **2017 sale to MG Motor** In 2017, GM was successfully able to sell its Halol plant in Gujarat to another Chinese-owned company, MG Motor, the Indian subsidiary of SAIC Motor Corporation of China. Experts say the changed en-

vironment due to India-China tensions is affecting many third parties as well as India's attractiveness to investors. "The GM-GWM saga is a stalemate that benefits no one and is adversely impacting India's stature as an FDI destination," said Santosh Pai, a partner with Link Legal, which advises companies on investments in India. "Ease of business includes ease of exiting a market." According to sources aware of the negotiations, GWM has not yet given up hope of being allowed to buy the GM plant in Talegaon, but plans are on the back-burner for now. Also hanging in the balance the Chinese company's MoU with the Maharashtra government for investments of up to ₹3,770 crore for "Make in India" projects.

PNB may raise ₹3,200 crore via share sale this quarter

Lender returned to black with ₹506-cr. profit in 3rd quarter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI
Punjab National Bank on Saturday said it planned to raise ₹3,200 crore from sale of shares during the current quarter to enhance its capital base. The bank had raised ₹3,788.04 crore via qualified institutional placement (QIP) in December following which the Centre's holding in the bank came down to 76.9% from 85.6%. The bank had taken approval for raising ₹14,000 crore through a mix of equity and debt. As per the plan, the bank decided to raise ₹3,000 crore from AT-I bonds, ₹4,000 crore from Tier II bonds and ₹7,000



crore from QIP. "We have already taken ₹4,000 crore from Tier-II and ₹3,788 crore we have taken through QIP as at the end of December. In January, we have also taken AT-I of another ₹500 crore. So, I am very confident that remaining ₹2,500 crore under Additional Tier-I bonds

will be garnered from the market before March 31," PNB MD S.S. Mallikarjuna Rao said. Talking to the media after announcing the results, he said, "We are also actively looking at going for the QIP again with respect to the remaining ₹3,200 crore to be acquired from the market at an appropriate time ... it could be in this fiscal also." PNB on Friday reported a standalone net profit of ₹506.03 crore for the December quarter on the back of a reduction in bad assets. It had posted a net loss of ₹492.28 crore a year earlier. Total income rose to ₹23,298.53 crore from ₹15,967.49 crore.

Risk of sharp deterioration in private banks' asset quality has receded: Moody's

'Asset performance at top 5 private banks better than expected in period till Dec.'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Indian government's policy measures to support bank borrowers have softened growth in non-performing loans (NPLs), thus averting the risk of a sharp deterioration in asset quality, Moody's Investors Service said on Friday. It added that the risk of a sharp deterioration in private banks' asset quality had also receded. "Ample domestic liquidity, loose monetary policy, moratoriums on loan repayments and government-guaranteed loans to small businesses have supported Indian banks' asset quality," said Alka Anbarasu, a Moody's vice president and senior credit officer. "As a result, restructured loans have not increased as much as we expected at the onset of the pandemic." Moody's said the asset performance at India's largest private sector banks



– HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, IndusInd Bank and IDBI Bank – was better than its expectations in the nine months ended December. The NPL ratios of IndusInd and HDFC Bank rose 48 basis points (bps) and 12 bps to 2.9% and 1.4% at the end of December, respectively, from March. Those of Axis Bank and ICICI Bank declined 31 bps and 11 bps, respectively, to 4.6% and 5.4%. IDBI's NPL ratio also fell, although it remained well above 20%, the highest among the six banks. The banks' NPL ratios include loans that have become delinquent since the end of August 2020 but are

not classified as NPLs because of a pending case in the Supreme Court. **'Yes Bank more at risk'** On the other hand, Yes Bank, which was rescued in 2020, is faced with greater asset risks than peers, although its capitalisation, liquidity and funding have improved, Moody's said. Overall, a recovery in India's economy in 2021 would support borrowers' debt-servicing capability after the support measures expire. "As a result, a sharp deterioration in asset quality is now less likely than Moody's previously anticipated," the credit rating agency added.

Mills association seeks rollback of duty on cotton imports

'Levy will lead to higher import of garments, escalate prices'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE

The Southern India Mills' Association has sought a rollback of the 10% customs duty on cotton imports announced in the Union Budget, as it would escalate the cost of garments and result in higher import of garments, especially from countries such as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Ashwin Chandran, chairman of Southern India Mills' Association, said that India imports mainly extra-long staple (ELS) cotton, organic cotton, contamination-free cotton and sustainable cotton. The production of these varieties is either nil or meagre in India. Indian mills consume



about 15 lakh bales of ELS cotton annually as against the domestic production of about five lakh bales, Mr. Chandran said. India is a major importer of Pima and Giza cotton varieties. The country imports about 33% of total Pima exports from the U.S. and 45% of Giza cotton from Egypt.

Several garment exporters in the MSME segment do not have capacities to make yarn from such premium cotton varieties and buy yarn from the domestic mills. Such exporters will not get Advance Authorisation Scheme benefits that the integrated mills that import cotton can avail of. Thus, Indian products made of imported cotton will become expensive in the international market, which will give competitors an edge. In the case of the domestic market, the cost of garments made of imported cotton will increase, leading to higher import of garments, he said.

Mental health tech platform raises \$5.2 mn

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Mental health platform InnerHour has raised \$5.2 million from Lightbox and others. In a statement, the start-up said this was largest quantum raised in the Indian mental health ecosystem till date. Lightbox led the round with \$4.5 million. InnerHour plans to use the funds to scale its technology-led mental health platform, "as it is set to serve a section of the 200 million Indians... suffering from mental health conditions". India accounts for a third of the global burden of depression, addictions and suicides, but there is a 95% treatment gap due to lack of access and awareness, affordability and variable quality of providers, it said.

India's Internet start-ups on cusp of listing: report

'Combined value at \$180 bn by 2025'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India's Internet start-ups that operate businesses ranging from food delivery to e-commerce to online insurance, are now on the cusp of listing, a report has said. "The growing scale and maturity of India's Internet economy is starting to create more value and investment opportunities. More than \$60 billion has been invested in India's Internet start-ups in the past five years, with around \$12 billion in 2020 alone," HSBC Global Research said in the report. The report put the total sector value (ex-fintech) to reach \$180 billion by 2025. India has 42 unicorns (firms with \$1-billion valuation) and more than 45 soonicorns (potential to be-



come unicorns), HSBC said. E-commerce is the largest opportunity, worth an estimated \$67 billion by 2025, it said adding this was worth \$31 billion 2019 after expanding at an impressive five-year CAGR of 39%. Ed-tech is the second-largest opportunity with a market of \$48 billion by 2025. Although still quite fragmented, it is one of the most profitable segments, HSBC said.

'Millennials keen on holidaying abroad'

Vaccines boost confidence: survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

With the vaccination drive against COVID-19 gathering steam across the world and restrictions on movements easing gradually, many millennials are keen on taking an international holiday this summer, according to a survey. Things are looking up for 2021, as 52% millennials are eager to take an international holiday this summer as COVID-19 vaccines ushered in hope that the end to the pandemic is on the horizon, a survey by BOTY (Business of Travel Trade) Travel Sentiment Tracker showed. The survey was done online with more than 6,000 millennial travellers across the country during January 2021. According to the survey, 75% millennials would

prefer to go to foreign destinations with fewer COVID-19 cases and 71% would opt for destinations with defined protocols for the pandemic to avoid unnecessary hassles. The industry finds survey findings encouraging for the travel industry. The findings, they believe, will generate more confidence in an industry, which is currently disappointed by being ignored in the Budget. "However, inbound and outbound are two verticals of travel that go hand in hand. We hope the government will look into opening up borders in India soon, and so will other countries," Travel Agents Association of India president and Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality's vice chairperson Jyoti Mayal said.



Training future leaders with 21st century communication skills



Introducing

STEP LIVE Junior+

An interactive English learning course for kids from classes 4-7.

Coach your kids with 10 LIVE classes on present day aspects of communication.

- Speaking** Strategies to improve public speaking skills with focus on aspects such as persuasion, expression of emotions, etc.
- Writing** Best practices to improve writing structure and introduction to using tools like PowerPoint
- Listening** Engaging exercises and activities to actively develop listening skills
- Practice** Practical tips and guidance to continue developing communication skills

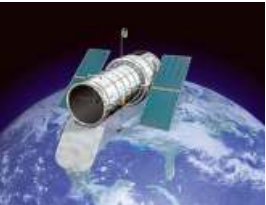
To develop your child's overall communication skills, visit **[BIT.LY/JUNIORPLUS](https://bit.ly/juniorplus)**



SNAPSHOTS



Early start
Microbiome refers to micro-organisms living inside humans and animals. There is a balance of useful and harmful components, which if disturbed results in ill-health. A recent study published in *Journal of Experimental Biology* finds that eating too much fat and sugar as a child can alter one's microbiome forever, even if the person later switches to healthy food.



Cloudless, hot Jupiter
For the first time, astronomers have come across a huge planet with about half the mass of Jupiter which is cloudless and unblocked by haze. Named WASP-62b, this planet was first found in 2012 but was not studied in detail until now. It is 575 light years away and orbits its star in just four-and-a-half days. The study was published in *The Astrophysical Journal Letters*.

Water scarcity likely in the Himalayan catchment if warming continues

Integrating glacier melt into currently used model improved predictions

ASWATHI PACHA

The coldly white snowpacks and glaciers of the Himalayas that make for a picturesque panorama are also important sources of water for about a billion people who live in the basins of the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers. But with rising global temperatures, these snowpacks and glaciers, which are highly sensitive, are affected.

This, in turn, affects the Himalayan hydrology. India, Nepal, Pakistan and China hugely depend on these Himalayan rivers for their daily needs and energy production.

Himalayan rivers

A new paper published last month studied how these Himalayan rivers are affected by the different components - rainfall-runoff, snow-melt and glacier-melt - and notes that if drier and warmer scenarios continue in the near future (2031-2050), we are more likely to face water stress in these catchment areas. They also note that if there is increased rainfall, this could lead to a water surplus situation.



Role of melt: The glacier-melt increases about 15% to 70% in a warmer environment with its present volume, but then decreases when glacier volumes shrink. •GETTY IMAGES

Our model helps make the current one complete and turns it into a more advanced and better one.

SUBIMAL GHOSH
IIT BOMBAY

The team studied five basins in the central Himalaya - Sutlej, Thulo Bheri, Kali Gandaki, Dudh Kosi and Arun. They analysed the daily precipitation, maximum and minimum daily temperatures, wind speeds, land cover, elevation and soil properties. "We developed a new glacier melt model and integrated it to the currently used land surface model. The currently used land surface model - used even by the Ministry of Earth Science

against each other," says Dr. Amit Dutt from the Tata Memorial Centre and the lead author of a paper published in the journal *Briefings in Bioinformatics*. "But we have automated the entire process thereby allowing users to analyse in a stringent and statistically disciplined manner the SARS-CoV-2 genome data without being restricted by the platform used to generate the data."

Unique tool

Explaining the uniqueness of the IPD tool, Dr. Dutt says that it can automatically determine the abundance of SARS-CoV-2 genome sequences, carry out mutation analysis with respect to the Wuhan sequence and finally, based on the mutations seen in each sample, assign it to the respective phylogenetic clade. Assigning a sample to a phylogenetic clade is based on the complete profile of mutations seen in the sample.

"Researchers can either upload sequence data to the IPD server which then automatically analyses the data for mutations and then assign the sample to the respective phylogenetic clade or download the tool before using it for bulk analysis," says



Convergence: Our analysis revealed 13 hotspot residues across the SARS-CoV-2 genome that occur at least in 40,000 or more samples, says Amit Dutt (right) •D. BHASKER

Dr. Dutt. Using the tool, the researchers analysed over 2,00,000 SARS-CoV-2 genome sequences available in the GISAID database. Only those with high-quality sequence data were included for analysis as the tool automatically rejects those with inferior quality. In over 2,00,000 sequences analysed, they found 2.58 million mutations in all with 6.6 nonsynonymous mutations (that do not alter the amino acid sequence) and five synonymous mutations (that alter the amino acid sequence) per sample. The results are posted on *bioRxiv* preprint server. Preprints are yet to be peer-reviewed.

Hotspot residues

"Our analysis revealed 13 hotspot residues across the SARS-CoV-2 genome that occur at least in 40,000 or more samples. This includes the D614G, one of the first mutations described in the spike protein," says Dr. Dutt. "Interestingly, none of the more recent spike glycoprotein mutations - N439K, S477Y, E484K, and N501Y - were found to be significantly abundant in the current variants in Britain, Brazil and South Africa."

The 13 hotspot mutations are occurring at a high frequency as seen in their presence in at least 40,000 samples. "So there is some kind of repetitive convergent evolution taking place. The 13 hotspot mutations which have been selected for are occurring independently," he cautions. "Besides hotspot mutations, we also see mutations in specific subclades. So there is adaptive and convergent evolution."

They found that the mutation rate of both nonsynonymous and synonymous mutations in 3,361 Indian COVID-19 sequence samples was comparable with the global rate. They also found 4,422 unique mutations that have not been reported outside India. "The hotspot mutations were seen in the Indian samples as well, including the D614G spike protein mutation. However, no significant occurrence of N439K, E484K, or N501Y mutations were found, except in two samples that harboured the S477Y spike protein mutation," he says.

According to Sanket Desai, the first author of the journal paper and the preprint, mutations are taking place randomly and selection will happen over time. It is just a matter of time before mutations that give the virus better fitness emerge. Viruses with such mutations will have either more transmissibility, as seen in the Britain variant or immune escape as seen in the South African variant. Chances of the rise of dangerous mutations that render the virus greater fitness are high due to persistence of the pandemic in some countries. With just over 5,100 sequences from India, of which only 4,041 are complete and high-coverage, there is no way of knowing if new variants first reported in Britain, Brazil and South Africa are already present in India and whether new mutations so far unreported elsewhere that render better fitness to the virus have already emerged here.

Far from target

Despite the COVID-19 task force mandating 5% of positive samples to be sequenced from all the States and Union Territories, the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) is far from reaching the target percentage.

With the SARS-CoV-2 genome being just about 30 kb in size, it is possible to pool up to 1,000 samples into one and carry out the sequencing at high coverage of 1,000x in one go and still be far less than 15 Gb sequencing capacity of platforms routinely used in Indian labs. High throughput will also help cut down the sequencing cost per sample and help have the data after analysis in about 10 days.

Silk-protein-based tumour models for testing out cancer drugs

The 3D model imitates native tumour microenvironment, its complex physiology

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

Improving on techniques for testing cancer drugs, researchers from IIT Guwahati have come up with silk-protein-based tumour models. An alternative to testing cancer drugs using patient-derived cell lines or animal models, the research involves fabrication of a bio-active composite of silk proteins from two species of silk moths and building a scaffolding that provides a three-dimensional base for growing tumouroids.

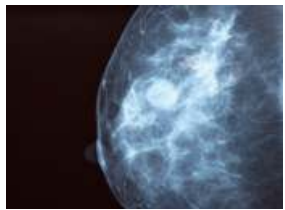
Normally, cancer drugs are tested using patient-derived primary cancer cells, on tumours induced in animal models or on genetically modified organisms. However, these models are insufficient to reproduce the three-dimensional morphology and physiology of human tumours and hence show inaccuracies in drug screening. Though animal models are better at this, they can show a variation depending on the species used. Moreover, animal models are expensive to maintain and can increase the cost of drug development. In this context, the silk-protein-based tumour

models developed by the group come as a useful intervention.

"As an alternative to existing cancer models, this tissue-engineered 3D silk-based tumour model imitates native tumour microenvironment, complex tumour physiology and metastasis, thus improving drug screening efficacy," says G. Janani, who is an author of the paper published in *Journal of Colloid and Interface Science*.

Building scaffolds

The scientists mixed the silk fibroins extracted from the cocoons of the domestic silk moth (*Bombyx mori*) and the silk glands of the muga silk moth (*Antheraea assama*) in equal proportions and used them to build up scaffolds on which they grew breast and liver tumour cell cultures. "The *Bombyx mori* silk fibroin has been well explored for healthcare applications and is also FDA approved," says Biman B Mandal of IIT Guwahati who led the study, in an email to *The Hindu*. The *A. assama* proteins add their own special strength to the scaffolding. As Prof. Mandal ex-



First step: The researchers created breast and liver tumouroids. •GETTY IMAGES

plains, "A. assama silk fibroin possesses inherent cell-adhesion RGD ligands [cell attachment sites], which provide better cell attachment and growth conditions in a 3D environment; porosity and tuneable mechanical strength [which] assist in proper nutrient diffusion."

As a proof of concept, the researchers created breast and liver tumouroids and these showed similar tumour physiology in 3D spatiotemporal arrangements and drug-resistance, as in native solid tumours. They also tested the screening capacity of the tumours on known anticancer drugs, Doxorubicin and Paclitaxel. The tumouroids grown on the silk composite exhibited increased resistance to cancer drugs (as in native condi-

tions) compared to monolayers and spheroids.

Vital step

"The proposed silk scaffold-based *in vitro* tumour model could serve as a vital step in research laboratories to evaluate a variety of anticancer drugs and understand their mechanisms. The cancer model in the current study demonstrated a better response than monolayer [2D] and spheroid models," says Prof. Mandal. He qualifies it further, saying, "Still, a [range] of conditions needs to be incorporated and optimised to achieve a high similarity to human cancers. Involving different types of cell such as endothelial cells, cancer stem cells, metastatic cells, etc in the same milieu would closely resemble the human tumour environment."

The group next plans to miniaturise the cancer model using microfluidics technology and to mimic the native tumour by adding blood vessels in it. "This improved model would assist in studying cancer metastasis from one tissue to another tissue and drug testing for cancer metastasis," he says.

Natural mutation found in African swine fever virus

REUTERS

Chinese scientists have found a natural mutation in the African swine fever virus they say could be less deadly than the strain that ravaged the world's largest pig herd in 2018 and 2019. The findings, published in the *Chinese Journal of Veterinary Science*, come amid intense debate.

Reuters reported last month that at least two new strains of African swine fever had been found on Chinese pig farms, which appeared to be man-made. The strains are causing a chronic form of African swine fever that is impacting production on sow farms, industry insiders have said.

The researchers at the Military Veterinary Institute in Changchun said there appeared to be a growing trend of lower mortality from African swine fever with more clinical symptoms that are not easy to detect and difficult to control. Such characteristics have

also been attributed to strains believed to have been made for use in illicit vaccines. But the researchers said that with the prolonged period of swine fever circulating in China, natural variants would inevitably appear. Less virulent variants have also been found in Latvia and Estonia in recent years.

The new strain, called HuB20, had a partial deletion of the CD2v gene and an adjacent 8CR gene. Earlier research in Russia has suggested that deleting the two genes could protect against African swine fever. The genes are different to those missing from virus isolates described previously to Reuters by industry participants.

"This variant does not contain any known marker genes, indicating that natural variants of ASFV are occurring in China and this may be related to the subacute epidemic of ASF in the country," the authors wrote.

Decoding how coronavirus mutates

Selective deletions seen in genetic sequence encoding for spike protein shape

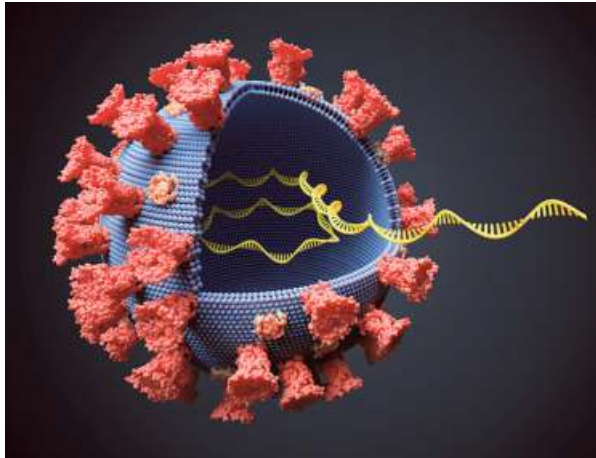
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Scientists have identified a pattern of mutations in the novel coronavirus which enable it to evade the immune system's antibodies, findings that shed light on how the virus may possibly escape existing vaccines and therapeutics.

According to the researchers, including those from the University of Pittsburgh in the U.S., the coronavirus undergoes selective deletions in parts of its genetic sequence that encode for the shape of its spike protein.

The spike protein is the part of the coronavirus which enables it to infect host cells, and is also the segment of the virus against which the body produces neutralising antibodies.

The study, published in the journal *Science*, assessed nearly 1,50,000 gene sequences of the spike protein collected from many parts of the world, and found that in



Slippery virus: In variants possessing the deletion mutations, formerly neutralising antibodies cannot grab hold of the virus. •GETTY IMAGES

variants possessing the deletion mutations, formerly neutralising antibodies cannot grab hold of the virus.

Based on the analysis, the scientists identified a form of virus "escape" that resulted from a common, strong selective pressure for the coronavirus to undergo such a change. They found at least nine

instances where such variants arose in patients whose COVID-19 infections were persistent.

According to the study, the scientists first came across these neutralisation-resistant mutations in a sample from an immunocompromised patient, who was infected with coronavirus for 74 days before ultimately

dying from COVID-19.

The researchers believe this long time of "cat and mouse" play between the immune system and the coronavirus in such patients gives "ample opportunity" to initiate a "co-evolutionary dance".

They said this competition results in "worrisome mutations" in the viral genome that are resulting in variants of the coronavirus such as the ones first reported in the UK and South Africa.

"Evolution was repeating itself. By looking at this pattern, we could forecast. If it happened a few times, it was likely to happen again," said Kevin McCarthy, a co-author of the study from the University of Pittsburgh.

While it is yet to be determined how far these mutations erode protection, McCarthy said "At some point, we're going to have to start reformulating vaccines, or at least entertain that idea."



Question Corner

Magnetic fields in plants

Can plants produce magnetic fields?

A recent study (*Scientific Reports*) from Germany found that the Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*) plant is capable of generating small magnetic fields. When these plants send electrical signals to trigger the closure of their traps, to catch an insect, a biomagnetism phenomenon was observed. The leaf stalk, or petiole, is not excitable and is electrically insulated from the trap. The first author of the study Anne Fabricant explained in a release that the magnetic signals in plants are very weak

and it was extremely difficult to measure them with the help of older technologies. Using new and advanced atomic magnetometers, the team was able to measure the magnetic signals, which had an amplitude of up to 0.5 picotesla, which is millions of times weaker than the Earth's magnetic field. "The signal magnitude recorded is similar to what is observed during surface measurements of nerve impulses in animals," explains Fabricant.

Interestingly, the trap is electrically excitable in a variety of ways: in addition to mechanical influences such as touch or injury, osmotic energy, for example salt-water loads, and thermal energy in the form of heat or cold can also trigger action potentials.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in



FILE PHOTO

Push for entrepreneurs

How will the Budget announcements on one-person companies help startups and non-resident Indians?

SRIRAM SRINIVASAN

The story so far: In her Budget speech, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced measures to ease norms on setting up one-person companies (OPCs). Ms. Sitharaman said the step – allowing OPCs to grow without any restrictions on paid-up capital and turnover – would directly benefit start-ups and innovators.

What is a one-person company?

As the name suggests, a one-person company is a company that can be formed by just one person as a shareholder. These companies can be contrasted with private companies, which require a minimum of two members to get going. However, for all practical purposes, these are like private companies.

It is not as if there was no scope for an individual with aspirations in business prior to the introduction of OPC as a concept. As an individual, a person could get into business through a sole proprietorship mode, and this is a path that is still available.

Why do we need such companies?

A single-person company and sole proprietorship differ significantly in how they are perceived in the eyes of law. For the former, the person and the company are considered separate legal entities. In sole proprietorship, the owner and the business are considered the same.

This has an important implication when it comes to the liability of the individual member or owner. In a one-person company, the sole owner's liability is limited to that person's investment. In a sole proprietorship set-up, however, the owner has unlimited liability as they are not considered different legal entities. Some see Ms. Sitharaman's proposal as a move to encourage corporatisation of small businesses. It is useful for entrepreneurs to have this option while deciding to start a business.

In 2005, the J.J. Irani Committee Report on Company Law mooted the concept of one-person companies and sought a simpler regime for single entrepreneurs with exemptions on procedures

Is this a new idea?
No. Such a concept already exists in many countries. In India, the concept was introduced in the Companies Act of 2013. Its introduction was based on the suggestions of the J.J. Irani Committee Report on Company Law, which submitted its recommendations in 2005. Pointing out that there was a need for a framework for

small enterprises, it said small companies would contribute significantly to the Indian economy, but because of their size, they could not be burdened with the same level of compliance requirements as large public-listed companies.

The report, while talking about giving entrepreneurial instincts of the people an outlet in the age of information technology, said, "It would not be reasonable to expect that every entrepreneur who is capable of developing his ideas and participating in the marketplace should do it through an association of persons."

While making a case for one-person companies, the committee also said, "Such an entity may be provided with a simpler regime through exemptions so that the single entrepreneur is not compelled to fritter away his time, energy and resources on procedural matters."

The law on one-person companies that took shape, as a result, exempted such companies from many procedural requirements, and, in some cases, provided relaxations. For instance, such a company does not need to conduct an annual general meeting, which is a requirement for other companies. A one-person company also does not require signatures of both its company secretary and director on its annual returns. One is enough.

There was, however, criticism that some rules governing a one-person company were restrictive in nature. This year's Union Budget has dealt with some of these concerns.

What has changed for these companies with the new measures in this year's Budget?

One of the measures that the Finance Minister has announced in the Budget pertains to the removal of restrictions on paid-up capital and turnover. The 2014 rule, which stated that a one-person company would cease to have that status once its paid-up share capital exceeds ₹50 lakh or its average turnover for the preceding three years exceeds ₹2 crore, has been lifted.

The proposals, the Minister said, also include, "reducing the residency limit for an Indian citizen to set up an OPC from 182 days to 120 days and also allow non-resident Indians (NRIs) to incorporate OPCs in India." Earlier, only an Indian citizen and an Indian resident could start a single-person company.

These changes come alongside a proposal to increase the capital base and turnover threshold for companies that can be classified as 'small', which means they can enjoy easy compliance requirements a bit longer. The capital base limit has been increased from ₹50 lakh to ₹2 crore, and the turnover limit has been increased from ₹2 crore to ₹20 crore.

How many OPCs does India have?

According to data compiled by the Monthly Information Bulletin on Corporate Sector, there were 34,235 one-person companies out of a total number of about 1.3 million active companies in India, as on December 31, 2020. The number of OPCs was 2,238 (out of a total of about 1 million companies) as on March 31, 2015. Data also show that more than half of the OPCs are in business services.

Government regulations and tech platforms

Why has the Centre issued a notice to Twitter and what are the laws governing the cyber world?

K. VENKATARAMANAN

The story so far: The Centre has issued notice to Twitter after the micro-blogging site restored more than 250 accounts that had been suspended earlier on the government's 'legal demand'. The government wants the platform to comply with its earlier order of January 31 by which it was asked to block accounts and a controversial hashtag that spoke of an impending 'genocide' of farmers for allegedly promoting misinformation about the protests, adversely affecting public order. Twitter reinstated the accounts and tweets on its own and later refused to go back on the decision, contending that it found no violation of its policy.

Are platforms required to comply with government requests?

Cooperation between technology services companies and law enforcement agencies is now deemed a vital part of fighting cybercrime, and various other crimes that are committed using computer resources. These cover hacking, digital impersonation and theft of data. The potential of the Internet and its offshoots such as mail and messaging services and social media networks to disseminate potentially harmful content such as hate speech, rumours, inflammatory and provocative messages and child pornography, has led to law enforcement officials constantly seeking to curb the ill-effects of using the medium. Therefore, most nations have framed laws mandating cooperation by Internet service providers or web hosting service providers and other intermediaries to cooperate with law and order authorities in certain circumstances.

What does the law in India cover?

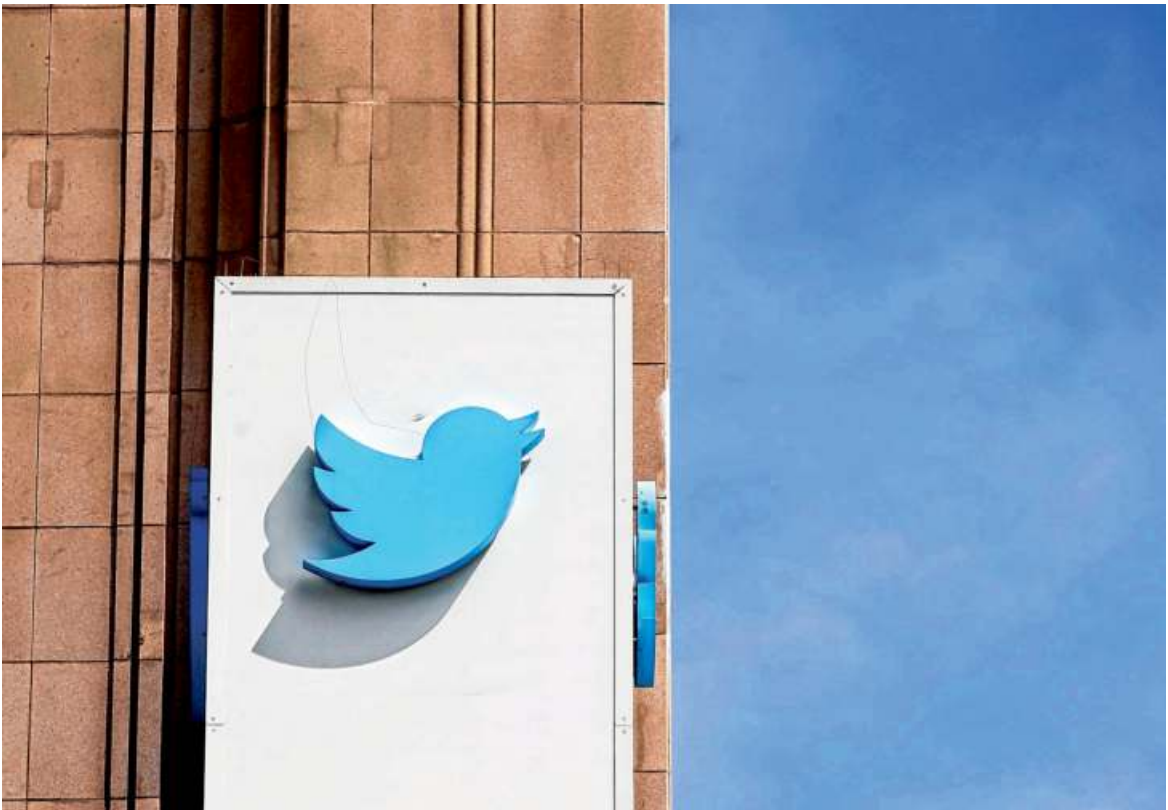
In India, the Information Technology Act, 2000, as amended from time to time, governs all activities related to the use of computer resources. It covers all 'intermediaries' who play a role in the use of computer resources and electronic records. The term 'intermediaries' includes providers of telecom service, network service, Internet service and web hosting, besides search engines, online payment and auction sites, online marketplaces and cyber cafes. It includes any person who, on behalf of another, "receives, stores or transmits" any electronic record. Social media platforms would fall under this definition.

What are the Centre's powers vis-à-vis intermediaries?

Section 69 of the Act confers on the Central and State governments the power to issue directions "to intercept, monitor or decrypt...any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer resource". The grounds on which these powers may be exercised are: in the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of India, defence of India, security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognisable offence relating to these, or for investigating any offence.

How does the government block websites and networks?

Section 69A, for similar reasons and grounds on which it can intercept or monitor information, enables the Centre to ask any agency of the government, or any



The Centre had directed Twitter to block a hashtag related to farm protests and 250 accounts. AP

Intermediaries must preserve and retain specified information in a manner prescribed by the Centre.

Contravention of this provision may attract a prison term of up to three years, besides a fine

intermediary, to block access to the public of any information generated, transmitted, received or stored or hosted on any computer resource. Any such request for blocking access must be based on reasons given in writing. Procedures and safeguards have been incorporated in the rules framed for the purpose.

What are the obligations of intermediaries under Indian law?

Intermediaries are required to preserve and retain specified information in a manner and format prescribed by the Centre for a specified duration. Contravention of this provision may attract a prison term that may go up to three years, besides a fine.

When a direction is given for monitoring, interception or decryption, the intermediary, and any person in charge of a computer resource, should extend technical assistance in the form of giving access or securing access to the resource involved, and must comply with the request to intercept or monitor or decrypt the information concerned. Failure to extend such assistance may entail a prison term of up to seven years, besides a fine. Failure to comply with a direction to block access to the public on a government's written request also attracts a prison term of up to seven years, besides a fine.

The Act also empowers the government to collect and monitor data on traffic. When an authorised agency asks for technical assistance in this regard, the intermediary must comply with the request. Non-compliance may lead to a prison term of up to three years, besides a fine.

Is the liability of the intermediary absolute?

No. Section 79 of the Act makes it clear that "an

intermediary shall not be liable for any third-party information, data, or communication link made available or hosted by him". This protects intermediaries such as Internet and data service providers and those hosting websites from being made liable for content that users may post or generate.

However, the exemption from liability does not apply if there is evidence that the intermediary abetted or induced the commission of the unlawful act involved. Also, the provision casts a responsibility on intermediaries to remove the offensive content or block access to it upon getting "actual knowledge" of an unlawful act being committed using their resources, or as soon as it is brought to their notice.

In *Shreya Singhal vs U.O.I (2015)*, the Supreme Court read down the provision to mean that the intermediaries ought to act only "upon receiving actual knowledge that a court order has been passed, asking [them] to expeditiously remove or disable access to certain material". This was because the court felt that intermediaries such as Google or Facebook may receive millions of requests, and it may not be possible for them to judge which of these were legitimate.

The role of the intermediaries has been spelt out in separate rules framed for the purpose in 2011. In 2018, the Centre favoured coming up with fresh updates to the existing rules on intermediaries' responsibilities, but the draft courted controversy. This was because one of the proposed changes was that intermediaries should help identify originators of offensive content. This led to misgivings that this could aid privacy violations and online surveillance. Also, tech companies that use end-to-end encryption argued that they could not open a backdoor for identifying originators, as it would be a breach of promise to their subscribers.

Other proposed changes, which have not been acted upon, include rules that intermediaries should deploy automated tools for proactively removing or disabling public access to unlawful information, and to have a 24x7 mechanism to deal with requisitions of law enforcement.

Can a 'bad bank' solve the growing NPA crisis?

What is the Budget proposal on non-performing assets and can it help recapitalise public sector banks?

PRASHANTH PERUMAL J.

The story so far: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech on Monday revived the idea of a 'bad bank' by stating that the Centre proposes to set up an asset reconstruction company to acquire bad loans from banks. While the problem of bad loans has been a perennial one in the Indian banking sector, the COVID-19 pandemic-triggered lockdown last year and the moratorium subsequently extended to borrowers by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have worsened the crisis. With banks expected to report even more bad loans this year, the idea of a 'bad bank' has gained particular significance.

What is a 'bad bank'?

A bad bank is a financial entity set up to buy non-performing assets (NPAs), or bad loans, from banks. The aim of setting up a bad bank is to help ease the burden on banks by taking bad loans off their balance sheets and get them to lend again to customers without constraints. After the purchase of a bad loan from a bank, the bad bank may later try to restructure and sell the NPA to investors who might be interested in purchasing it.

A bad bank makes a profit in its operations if it manages to sell the loan at a price higher than what it paid to acquire the loan from a commercial bank. However, generating profits is usually not the primary purpose of a bad bank – the objective is to ease the burden on banks, holding a large pile of stressed assets, and to get them to lend more actively.

What is the extent of the crisis faced by banks?

According to the latest figures released by the RBI, the total size of bad loans in the balance sheets of Indian banks at a gross level was just around ₹9 lakh crore as of March 31, 2020, down significantly from over ₹10 lakh crore two years ago.

While the size of total bad loans held by banks has decreased over the last few years, analysts point out that it is mostly the result of larger write-offs rather than due to improved recovery of bad loans or a slowdown in the accumulation of fresh bad loans.

The size of bad loan write-offs by banks has steadily increased since the RBI launched its asset quality review procedure in 2015, from around ₹70,000 crore in 2015-16 to nearly ₹2.4 lakh crore in 2019-20, while the size of fresh bad loans accumulated by banks increased last year to over ₹2 lakh crore from about ₹1.3 lakh crore in the previous year. So, the Indian banking sector's woes seem to be far from over.

Further, due to the lockdown imposed last year, the proportion of banks' gross non-performing assets is expected to rise sharply from 7.5% of gross advances in September 2020 to at least 13.5% of gross advances in



The relaxations introduced due to the COVID-19 lockdown have worsened the NPA crisis. FILE PHOTO

Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan argues that a bad bank will merely shift bad assets from the hands of public sector banks into the hands of another bank, both owned by the government

September 2021.

What are the pros and cons of setting up a bad bank?

A supposed advantage in setting up a bad bank, it is argued, is that it can help consolidate all bad loans of banks under a single exclusive entity. The idea of a bad bank has been tried out in countries such as the United States,

Germany, Japan and others in the past.

The troubled asset relief program, also known as TARP, implemented by the U.S. Treasury in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, was modelled around the idea of a bad bank. Under the program, the U.S. Treasury bought troubled assets, such as mortgage-backed securities, from U.S. banks at the peak of the crisis, and later resold them when market conditions improved. According to reports, it is estimated that the Treasury through its operations earned nominal profits.

Many critics, however, have pointed to several problems with the idea of a bad bank to deal with bad loans. Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan has been one of the critics, arguing that a bad bank backed by the government will merely shift bad assets from the hands of public sector banks, which are owned by the government, to the hands of a bad bank, which is again owned by the government. There is little reason to believe that a mere transfer of assets from one pocket of the government to another will lead to a successful resolution of these bad debts, when the set of incentives

facing these entities is essentially the same.

Other analysts believe that unlike a bad bank set up by the private sector, a bad bank backed by the government is likely to pay too much for stressed assets. While this may be good news for public sector banks, which have been reluctant to incur losses by selling off their bad loans at cheap prices, it is bad news for taxpayers, who will once again have to foot the bill for bailing out troubled banks.

Will a 'bad bank' help ease the bad loan crisis?

A key reason behind the bad loan crisis in public sector banks, some critics point out, is the nature of their ownership. Unlike private banks, which are owned by individuals who have strong financial incentives to manage them well, public sector banks are managed by bureaucrats who may often not have the same commitment to ensuring these lenders' profitability. To that extent, bailing out banks through a bad bank does not really address the root problem of the bad loan crisis.

Further, there is a huge risk of moral hazard. Commercial banks that are bailed out by a bad bank are likely to have little reason to mend their ways. After all, the safety net provided by a bad bank gives these banks more reason to lend recklessly, and thus, further exacerbate the bad loan crisis.

Will it help revive credit flow in the economy?

Some experts believe that by taking bad loans off the books of troubled banks, a bad bank can help free capital of over ₹5 lakh crore that is locked in by banks as provisions against these bad loans. This, they say, will give banks the freedom to use the freed-up capital to extend more loans to their customers. This gives the impression that banks have unused funds lying in their balance sheets that they could use if only they could get rid of their bad loans. It is, however, important not to mistake banks' reserve requirements for their capital position. This is because what may be stopping banks from lending more aggressively may not be the lack of sufficient reserves, which banks need to maintain against their loans.

Instead, it may simply be the precarious capital position that many public sector banks find themselves in at the moment. In fact, many public sector banks may be considered to be technically insolvent as an accurate recognition of the true scale of their bad loans would show their liabilities as far exceeding their assets. So, a bad bank, in reality, could help improve bank lending not by shoring up bank reserves, but by improving banks' capital buffers.

To the extent that a new bad bank set up by the government can improve banks' capital buffers by freeing up capital, it could help banks feel more confident to start lending again.

NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR DEMOCRACY

The party that defied the junta

The political organisation Aung San Suu Kyi co-founded has been the most potent opposition to Myanmar’s military rulers for three decades

In Focus

■ The NLD was founded in September 1988 by Suu Kyi and her allies amid a popular resistance against the military dictatorship

■ The party swept the 1990 election, but the junta refused to hand over power. It annulled the results and put NLD leaders under detention

■ After Suu Kyi was released in 2010, the NLD accepted the 2008 Constitution and agreed to contest elections. It swept the 2005 and 2020 polls, but is back to square one as the military has staged another coup

STANLY JOHNY

In 1988, Aung San Suu Kyi, who was living in the U.K., travelled to Rangoon (now Yangon), to be with her ailing mother. Gen. Ne Win, the long-time military dictator of Burma (now Myanmar), had stepped down. Demonstrations erupted across the country, demanding democracy. The junta unleashed a violent crackdown on the protesters. Many of the wounded were taken to the hospital in Yangon where Ms. Suu Kyi was attending to her mother. For the daughter of Aung San, who fought against both the British colonialists and the Japanese imperialists and founded the Burmese military, the brief stay in the hospital gave a closer view of the military regime that had been ruling her country since the 1962 coup.

The protesters, mostly students, wanted a leader against the junta. In a country where Aung San, who was assassinated in 1947 at age 32, is widely revered, they would not have found a better name than Aung San Suu Kyi to lead their campaign for democracy. Ms. Suu Kyi agreed to address the protesters. On August 26, 1988, half-a-million people showed up at the capital’s famous Shwedagon Pagoda, to listen to her. “I could not, as my father’s daughter, remain indifferent to all that is going on,” she told the crowd, in a speech that would change not just her destiny but also that of her country. “This national crisis could in fact be called the second struggle for national independence.” She couldn’t stop the mili-

tary. Within a month, a new junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), would take over. But the struggle she launched would never cease. As the Generals were trying to regain control, Ms. Suu Kyi helped found the National League for Democracy (NLD), the most potent political rival to the military till date. On February 1 this year, when the military staged another coup, the soldiers naturally went after almost all the top leaders of the NLD, including Ms. Suu Kyi and President Win Myint.

The party was founded on September 27, 1988, a week after the SPDC was formed. Tin Oo, a former Commander-in-Chief of the Burmese military, and Aung Shwe, a former Brigadier-General, joined hands with Ms. Suu Kyi. Mr. Tin Oo was the first president of the party, while Ms. Suu Kyi served as the general secretary for years. The NLD, a liberal, social democratic party, demanded the junta give up power and initiate the country’s transition to democracy. The junta detained Ms. Suu Kyi, Mr. Tin Oo and other NLD leaders in response. But under domestic and international pressure, the SPDC agreed to hold polls in 1990. The NLD swept the polls, winning roughly 58% of the popular vote (382 seats in the 492-member Assembly), while the National Unity Party, a proxy of the military, won only 10 seats. Expectations were high that Myanmar’s ordeal was coming to an end.

But the Generals had other plans. They annulled the results, arrested several lawmakers and detained Ms.



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

Suu Kyi again at her house on the University Avenue in Yangon. Between 1989 and 2010, she spent about 15 years under house arrest. Now, after 10 years of freedom, including five years in power, Ms. Suu Kyi is back in detention.

Resistance to Army
Even in the face of increased state repression, neither Ms. Suu Kyi nor the NLD did compromise on their most vital demand – the end of the military rule. The Generals knew that Ms. Suu Kyi was the greatest threat to their hold on power. She has been immensely popular. People referred to her ‘The Lady’, when uttering her name angered the rulers. The junta promised her freedom if she agreed to leave the country. She didn’t.

The NLD, in the face of a hostile junta, built a centralised party organisation. Ms. Suu Kyi assumed party presidency in 2011. She is now the chairperson. Mr. Tin Oo remains a patron. The NLD has two vice-chairpersons, a two-member secretariat and a 16-member central executive committee, which is the

main decision-making body. It also has several working committees and networks.

For years, the NLD remained a defiant political movement that rode the wave of resentment against the junta. In 2007, a series of protests broke out in Myanmar against the regime of

Even in the face of increased state repression, the NLD refused to compromise on its key demands – the end of the military rule and transition to democracy

Gen. Than Shwe, which was brutally cracked down. It was also the time when the military’s grip on power was loosening. International sanctions prevented the country’s economic rise, while the rest of Asia was marching ahead. Myanmar was seen increasingly dependent on China. Pressure was mounting both inside the

country and abroad. In 2008, the military adopted a new Constitution that promised semi-democracy. The NLD initially rejected the Constitution and boycotted the polls. The pro-military Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) won the election and the retired General Thein Sein became the President. He initiated political reforms. The government released Ms. Suu Kyi and other political prisoners, relaxed media censorship and promised transition to democracy.

President Thein Sein wanted the NLD’s participation for legitimacy for his reforms. In August 2011, he met Ms. Suu Kyi for dinner. Later that day, she told Mr. Tin Oo, “I have the feeling that I can work with him.” The NLD later recognised the Constitution that has reserved 25% of the seats in Parliament and three key Ministries in the government – Defence, Home Affairs and Border – for the military, and agreed to contest the election. In the 2012 byelections, the NLD won 43 of the 44 seats it contested. Ms. Suu Kyi was elect-

ed to Parliament from Kawhmu.

The NLD won an outright majority in the 2015 Parliament elections. But Ms. Suu Kyi cannot become President under the current Constitution as her children are foreign citizens. Win Myint, a long-time NLD leader and a former political prisoner, became the President. The party, with its majority, passed a law creating a new post of State Counsellor for Ms. Suu Kyi. But the fundamental contradiction between an Army that never wanted to fully relinquish power and a political party that is dedicated to democratise and rebuild Myanmar was never resolved. The NLD continued to call for constitutional reforms, which the military found as a direct threat to its interests.

Full circle
Ms. Suu Kyi initially offered peace to the country’s various ethnic rebel groups. But she didn’t have the powers to keep the promises. Instead of challenging the Generals, the NLD opted for tactical cooperation. On the

Rohingya issue – over 700,000 Rohingya Muslims were forced out of the country since 2017 by a military crackdown on the Rakhine state – she toed the military line, at least publicly. She once told Hillary Clinton that she did not want to be an icon. “I have always been a politician.” But even her cold political pragmatism did not help Suu Kyi tackle the country’s power-hungry Generals.

The November 2020 election was a turning point. The NLD won another landslide, while the USDP, the military proxy, suffered a humiliating defeat. The USDP alleged voter fraud. The military backed those claims, without offering any evidence. Since then, tensions were on the rise and fears of another coup were in the air. Those fears came true in the early morning of February 1 when the military chief Min Aung Hlaing ordered the soldiers to detain the country’s elected leaders. For the NLD, which was born out of the popular resistance against the junta’s power grab, history has come full circle.

PROUD BOYS

Far-right provocateurs

The group that backed Trump has been called a terrorist outfit by Canada

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

Proud Boys, stand back and stand by, Donald Trump, then President of the U.S., said during the first presidential election debate in September last year, after he was challenged by the moderator to condemn white supremacism. The far-right men’s group of self-described “western chauvinists”, which has grown in notoriety since has recently been in the news for its visible involvement in the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol.

The group, which until recently strongly supported Mr. Trump, was started by British-Canadian Gavin McInnes in 2016, when he launched its New York chapter. Mr. McInnes, who was described by *The New York Times* in 2018 as “a former Brooklyn hipster turned far-right provocateur”, also co-founded digital media company *Vice* in 1994 and was associated with it until 2008.

The Proud Boys is a male-only group known to espouse racist and misogynistic views. In a 2017 article, Mr. McInnes wrote: “We [white men] brought roads and infrastructure to India and they are still using them as toilets. Our criminals built nice roads in Australia but Aboriginals keep using them as a bed.”

Over the years, the group has also been involved in several street confrontations across the U.S. with Antifa, an amorphous net-



work of anti-racist, anti-fascist organisations. One such fight occurred in Washington DC in December, two days before the Electoral College was scheduled to certify Joe Biden’s victory in the presidential elections.

Last week, Canada, where Mr. McInnes grew up, officially designated the Proud Boys as a terrorist organisation, adding it to a list with names like the Islamic State, Boko Haram, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda on it. The listing says, “Members of the group espouse misogynistic, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant, and/or white supremacist ideologies and associate with white supremacist groups. The Proud Boys consists of semi-autonomous chapters located in the U.S., Canada, and internationally.”

Now that it is listed, members who commit violent crimes could be charged with terror-related offences in Canada and financial as-

sets linked to the group can be frozen.

Escalation in violence
Canadian Public Safety Minister Bill Blair said there had been an escalation in violence in the aftermath of the U.S. elections by various groups, including the Proud Boys. Ideologically motivated extremism was the greatest threat to Canadian domestic security, as per Mr. Blair. He said the U.S. Capitol attack of January 6 initiated a political response, but the decision itself was a legal call, according to *Politico*. Henry ‘Enrique’ Tarrío, the 30-something Cuban American chairman of the Proud Boys, said Canada’s move was “ridiculous.” “It’s infringement of free speech rights. All the Canadian Proud Boys have ever done is go to rallies,” Mr. Tarrío said, as per the Associated Press.

Mr. Tarrío was arrested on January 4 – two days before the Capitol attack – for

possessing high-capacity firearm magazines and for burning a Black Lives Matter flag outside a Washington DC church in December. (He is out on bail awaiting trial). It has also emerged that about a decade ago, Mr. Tarrío, after a previous arrest, had repeatedly cooperated with law enforcement and the FBI in their pursuit of over a dozen alleged criminals, according to court records analysed by Reuters. His lawyer described him as a “prolific cooperator” as per court records. Mr. Tarrío has denied this, as per the Reuters report.

Trouble is brewing for the group in the U.S. too as the FBI investigates its role in the U.S. Capitol attack. Some group members were identified from videos and pictures (including selfies) taken during the riot. Four cases have been registered against six members, according to the *New York Times*, although no case has been registered against the group as a whole, as per the *Washington Post*. The charges against individuals include conspiracy, obstruction of an official proceeding (the certification of the 2020 election), as well as theft and destruction of government property.

Apart from this, the U.S. is conducting a domestic extremism review and will await the results of that process before deciding on whether to declare the Proud Boys a terrorist organisation, Press Secretary Jen Psaki said last week.

LI ZIQI

Countryside calm

Lessons in soft power from an unlikely Chinese social media phenomenon

ANANTH KRISHNAN

On February 2, announced the Guinness World Records, Chinese social media star Li Ziqi had crossed 14 million subscribers on her YouTube channel, making her the most followed Chinese-language account in the world.

Li Ziqi (pronounced zì-chee) has, since uploading her first YouTube video in August 2017, become an unlikely social media phenomenon. For the uninitiated, her slickly produced videos show a slice of life in the Chinese countryside, taking viewers into a world of idyllic calm that offers a sharp contrast to fast-paced urban life.

The videos are shot painstakingly with a high quality of production, showing Ms. Li doing everything from chopping firewood to climbing trees to pick fruit, all intended to convey a sense of therapeutic calm, with the kind of aesthetic one usually finds in online meditation videos.

Her most popular video so far, which has 83 million views, is a case in point. Titled “Peanut and melon seeds, dried meat, dried fruit, snowflake cake”, it begins with Ms. Li searching the forest floor, with a basket strapped to her back, sifting through leaves to find chestnuts. She picks oranges and apples from trees, and strolls through fields in the company of her pet lamb and puppies. She then uses traditional cooking



ILLUSTRATION: J.A. PREMKUMAR

methods – she eschews all modern appliances – to make a variety of snacks and popcorn. Her videos go beyond cooking. Ms. Li is a one-woman army, making bamboo crafts and, as she showed in her first YouTube video in August 2017, a dress using grape skin. Ms. Li’s is an unlikely success story. Born in Mianyang, a city in southwestern Sichuan province, she grew up with her father after her parents separated. He passed away when she was six, leaving her in the care of her grandparents. She now lives with her grandmother, who makes a regular appearance in her videos and is the main benefactor of Ms. Li’s culinary skills.

She dropped out of high school and tried odd jobs in the city from waitressing to working as a DJ in a bar. Unable to find work, she moved back to the countryside and opened an online clothing store. Her first videos were shot only on her

phone, a far cry from today’s elaborately produced videos with a videographer assisting her full-time.

Global success
Her global success has now spurred other rural Chinese celebrity success stories. The latest such sensation, also from Sichuan, is a Tibetan herder named Tenzin, known as Dingzhen in China, who has become a social media star for his rugged looks and herding lifestyle, and is being promoted by the local government to boost tourism.

“It looks like a random incident, but it’s not,” Han Li, a professor at Rhodes College who wrote a study on rural internet celebrities in China, told the *South China Morning Post*. “It’s getting harder and harder to find jobs, and the high living costs mean that it’s increasingly hard for migrant workers to survive and settle down in cities. The government is sending the signal,

telling people that you should go back to your rural hometowns, where there might be more economic opportunities.”

If Ms. Li’s success is now encouraging local governments in China to manufacture their own stars, her global footprint will be harder to replicate. The irony, of course, is Ms. Li’s stardom has grown on a platform, YouTube, that is banned in China. So are Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, all of which can be used only with virtual private network software that many Chinese don’t use. Language is another barrier, which Ms. Li has worked around by subtitling her videos and relying broadly on the images to tell her story (she rarely speaks).

Even as China’s government spends billions of dollars in trying to boost the country’s soft power and cultural appeal overseas, Ms. Li’s story serves a reminder that cultural appeal can’t often be engineered, and the stories that connect widely are often those that are authentic and organic.

In 2016, President Xi Jinping urged the state media “to tell China’s story well” abroad. There are many other Li Ziqis in the country who can perhaps tell that story better than any of the government’s cash-rich official media outlets that are now tasked with doing so – only that a great firewall of China’s internet restrictions stands in between them and the rest of the world.

Ruthless Root, brutal Stokes bat India into the ground

The England skipper's double century and the all-rounder's 82 pilot England to a mammoth 555 for eight at close on the second day

ENGLAND IN INDIA

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

A milestone looming, he bravely skipped down the track displaying compelling lightness of feet, got to the pitch of the flighted ball from R. Ashwin, and eased it over long-on to take him past 200.

Then, Joe Root laughed as he celebrated the occasion.

The trick is as much in the mind as technique. When you get both aspects right, the effect can be devastating.

You watch Root bat and it's hard to believe he is captaining the side. He's smiling, enjoying himself in the middle, making light the burden of expectations from a skipper. And with his mind and body in harmony, Root is in a rarefied 'Zone'.

Flowing strokes

In this territory, the belief is big, the ball appears bigger, the strokes flow in all directions, the gaps are opened up and the hefty scores are conjured with consummate ease.

The only man to notch up a double hundred in his 100th Test, and the first visit-

ing batsman to make a double hundred in India since 2010, the history-making Root continued to leave landmarks behind.

And England, riding on Root's 218 and a brutal 82 from the powerful Ben Stokes – the two added 124 – was on a commanding 555 for eight at close on day two at Chepauk.

The pitch showed signs of wear and tear, where the ball often kicked up from the footmarks.

Root's monumental effort – he was finally prised out by one that straightened from left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem – underlined his powers of concentration.

Hard man to dislodge

He is a hard man to dislodge. And the right-left combination of Root and Stokes kept India wicket-less before lunch. Picking length early, Root continued to impress. A scorching square cut of Jasprit Bumrah caught the attention. He drove spinners in front of the wicket with authority.

The left-handed Stokes' duel with Ashwin was engaging. The big Englishman



Study in contrast: While Joe Root exhibited excellent technique and concentration, Ben Stokes was all power. •SPORTZPICS/BCCI



STOKES

thrust his front leg forward and blasted the off-spinner straight for a six. Ashwin got one to dip, Stokes miscued but the bowler could not hang on to a tough return catch. Forceful on the on-side, Stokes remarkably bludgeoned Nadeem with slog-sweeps even as the bowler got the ball to jump from the footmarks. Stokes finally perished swinging at Na-

deem. There were useful contributions from Ollie Pope, Jos Buttler and Dom Bess as England's tally swelled.

And the consistent Ishant inched within a wicket of the 300-mark casting Buttler and Jofra Archer with two sharp incoming deliveries.

Interestingly, India lost all three reviews and when offie Washington Sundar got one

to drift and turn, found the edge of Buttler's bat but saw his appeal being negated – replays confirmed the nick – India had run out of them.

Washington, bowling with bite as the day progressed, was unlucky not to consume Bess, floored by Rohit Sharma at mid-wicket.

It was that sort of a day for India. A day of missed opportunities.

I think there has been spin, bounce and reverse [swing]. We just played really well, you have to give us credit. We gave ourselves a great opportunity to get in and score runs on a pitch that is helping the bowlers

TV PICKS

India vs England: 1st Test, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 9.15 a.m.
Pakistan vs South Africa: 2nd Test, Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 10.30 a.m.
Premier League: Star Sports 3, 10 p.m.; SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 5.30 p.m., 7.30 p.m., 10 p.m. & 12.45 a.m. (Monday)
ISL: Star Sports 1, 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 5 p.m. & 7.30 p.m.
ATP Cup: Eurosport (SD & HD), 4 a.m.

IN BRIEF

Smith wins his third Allan Border Medal

MELBOURNE
Steve Smith claimed his third Allan Border Medal while Beth Mooney bagged her maiden Belinda Clarke Award, the top two honours of the Australian Cricket Awards. Smith was honoured for his performances in all three formats of the game, while Mooney bagged the recognition in the Australian women's game for the first time. PTI

Former NZ all-rounder Bruce Taylor no more

AUCKLAND
Former New Zealand all-rounder Bruce Taylor passed away on Saturday, aged 77. Taylor is the only cricketer to have scored a century and take a five-wicket haul on his Test debut. Taylor played 32 matches for New Zealand and 30 of those came in the longest format, where he scored 898 runs at 20.40 and claimed 111 wickets at 26.60. ANI

Celtics hold on to beat Clippers

LOS ANGELES
Jayson Tatum scored a team-high 34 points and Kemba Walker (24) delivered a late surge as Boston Celtics rallied from a first-half deficit to hold on and edge Los Angeles Clippers 119-115 on Friday.
The results: Cleveland Cavaliers 105 lost to Milwaukee Bucks 123; Brooklyn Nets 117 lost to Toronto Raptors 123; Charlotte Hornets 121 lost to Utah Jazz 138.

Daruvala grabs second spot for Mumbai Falcons

ABU DHABI
Mumbai Falcons' Jehan Daruvala continued to sparkle in the Formula 3 Asian Championship, grabbing second place in Race 1 of the third round here at the Yas Marina International Circuit late on Saturday evening. This is his fourth consecutive podium finish over three nerve-wracking days. On Sunday, the last two races of the round will take place.

Kadhe and Added win doubles title

VILLENA (SPAIN)
Arjun Kadhe and Dan Added of France beat Inigo Cervantes Huego of Spain and Mark Vervoort of the Netherlands in the doubles final of the \$25,000 ITF men's tennis tournament here.
Other result: \$15,000 ITF women, Monastir, Tunisia: Semifinals: Manon Arcangioli (Fra) bt Zeel Desai 6-4, 6-2.

Faheem and Rizwan revive Pakistan innings

ASSOCIATED PRESS
RAWALPINDI

The lower-order increased Pakistan's lead to 200 runs against South Africa on the third day of the second and final Test on Saturday.

All-rounder Faheem Ashraf and Mohammad Rizwan featured in a 52-run sixth-wicket stand, guiding the hosts to 129-6 at stumps.

Earlier, fast bowler Hasan Ali (5-54) helped the hosts dismiss South Africa for 201, a lead of 71.

The scores: Pakistan 272 & 129/6 in 51 overs (Azhar Ali 33, Mohd. Rizwan 28 batting, Faheem Ashraf 29, Linde 3/12) vs South Africa 201 in 65.4 overs (A. Markram 32, T. Bavuma 44 n.o., Q. de Kock 29, W. Mulder 33, Hasan Ali 5/54).

Hazare Trophy to begin on Feb. 20

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

The inter-State one-day cricket tournament for the Vijay Hazare Trophy will be played in seven cities from February 20 to March 14.

While the venue for the knockouts is yet to be finalised, the six group stages will be held at Surat, Indore, Bengaluru, Jaipur, Kolkata and Chennai. From the venues that hosted the Mush-

taq Ali Trophy last month, Mumbai and Vadodara have been replaced with Surat and Jaipur.

The groups: Group A (Surat): Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Hyderabad, Tripura, Baroda, Goa.

Group B (Indore): Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Andhra Pradesh.

Group C (Bengaluru): Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Odisha, Railways, Bihar.

Russia books a meeting with Italy

Medvedev, Rublev rally past Zverev, Struff; Spain falters without Nadal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

Daniil Medvedev battled back from a set down to top-ple Alexander Zverev and power Russia into the ATP Cup final here on Saturday. Russia will meet the Matteo Berrettini-led Italy.

The World No. 4 had to dig deep against the German World No. 7, finally winning 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 on his fourth match-point.

He sealed the tie after Andrey Rublev, who won five ATP titles last year as he raced up the rankings, also pulled off a come-from-be-

hind win, grinding down Jan-Lennard Struff 3-6, 6-1, 6-2.

Italy beat last year's finalists Spain, which again misdeed the injured Rafael Nadal.
The results: Semifinals: Russia bt Germany 2-1 [Andrey Rublev bt Jan-Lennard Struff 3-6, 6-1, 6-2; Daniil Medvedev bt Alexander Zverev 3-6, 6-3, 7-5; Evgeny Donskoy & Aslan Karatsev lost to Struff & Kevin Kravietz 6-3, 7-6(2)].

Italy bt Spain 3-0 [Fabio Fognini bt Pablo Carreno Busta 6-1, 1-6, 6-4; Matteo Berrettini bt Roberto Bautista Agut 6-3, 7-5; Simone Bolelli & Andrea Vasasori w/o Busta & Marcel Granollers].



Pumped up: Andrey Rublev is ecstatic after coming from behind to beat Jan-Lennard Struff in their ATP Cup rubber. •AFP

Villa beats sloppy Arsenal

EURO LEAGUES

REUTERS
BIRMINGHAM

An early goal from Ollie Watkins helped Aston Villa beat a sloppy Arsenal 1-0 on Saturday to move up to eighth in the Premier League, consigning the visitors to a second loss in as many games.

The results: Premier League: Aston Villa 1 (Watkins 2) bt Arsenal 0; Burnley 1 (Gudmundsson 53) drew with Brighton 1 (Dunk 36); Newcastle 3 (Wil-

lock 16, Almiron 26, 45+4) bt Southampton 2 (Minamino 30, Ward-Prowse 48).

LaLiga: Levante 2 (Morales 30, 67) drew with Granada 2 (Kennedy 43, Soldado 90+2); Huesca 1 (Galan 48) lost to Real Madrid 2 (Varane 55, 84).

Bundesliga: Bayer Leverkusen 5 (Demirbay 18, 31, Bailey 56, Wirtz 68, Gray 84) bt Stuttgart 2 (Kalajdzic 50, 77); Freiburg 2 (Jeong 49, Schmid 52) bt Borussia Dortmund 1 (Moukoko 76); Schalke 0 lost to RB Leipzig 3 (Mukiele 45+2, Sabitzer 73, Orban 87); Mainz 1 (Niak-

hate 22-pen) bt Union Berlin 0; Augsburg 0 lost to Wolfsburg 2 (Weghorst 38, Baku 59).

Serie A: Atalanta 3 (Ilicic 14, Gossens 19, Muriel 21) drew with Torino 3 (Belotti 42, Bremer 45+1, Bonazzoli 84); Sassuolo 1 (Caputo 25) lost to Spezia 2 (Erlin 39, Oyasi 78).

Friday: LaLiga: Alaves 1 (Joselu 66) bt Real Valladolid 0.

Bundesliga: Hertha Berlin 0 lost to Bayern Munich 1 (Coman 21).

Serie A: Fiorentina 0 lost to Inter Milan 2 (Barella 31, Persic 52).



Pavana Nagaraj.

•SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

catching the eye was Kerala's Ancy Sojan who won the under-20 women's long jump with a 6.20m effort.

The results (winners only): Boys: Under-20: 10,000m: M. Sathish Kumar (TN) 29:50.69s;

Long jump: Jeswin Aldrin (TN) 7.47m; **Javelin:** Rohit Yadav (UP) 77.86m.

Under-18: Javelin: Vivek Kumar (MP) 72.83m.

Under-16: Shot put: Anurag Singh Kaler (UP) 20.16m NR, OR 18.05m, Adhish Ghildiyal, 2017); **Discus:** Ram Narayan (Del) 53.17m.

Girls: Under 20: 5000m: Ankita Dhyani (Utk) 16:21.19s NR, OR 16:21.59, Sunita Rani, Catania, 1997); **Long jump:** Ancy Sojan (Ker) 6.20m.

Under-18: Long jump: Agasara Nandini (Tel) 5.80m.

Under-16: High jump: Pavana Nagaraj (Kar) 1.73m NR, OR 1.69m, Kavya Muthanna, 2003); **Long jump:** Sabita Toppo (Odi) 5.59m; **Shot put:** Rubasri Krishnamoorthi (TN) 14.35m.

Lightning Bolt should score hat-trick

HYDERABAD: Lightning Bolt, who has won two races very well during this Hyderabad racing season, is in rousing form and should score a hat-trick in the Peddapalli Plate, the chief event of Sunday's (February 7) races.

Rails will be announced one hour before the first race.

1. GANGOTRI PLATE (Div. II) (1,200m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 1.45 p.m.: 1. Explosive (13) Mukesh Kumar 60.5, 2. Angel Tesoro (9) Kuldeep Singh 58, 3. Trump Star (7) Suraj Narreddu 56.5, 4. Blissful (5) Nakhat Singh 56, 5. Blazing Speed (2) Ajeeth Kumar 55.5, 6. Star Dancer (3) Kiran Naidu 54, 7. Echoes Of Heaven (12) Santosh Raj N.R. 53.5, 8. Vilking Sun (11) Md. Ismail 53.5, 9. Tapatio (6) Surya Prakash 53, 10. Berkeley (8) R. Laxmikanth 52.5, 11. Star Babe (4) Akshay Kumar 52, 12. Fantastic Show (10) B.R. Kumar 51.5, 13. Glendale (4) P. Gaddam 51.5 and 14. Let It Be Me (1) G. Nareish 51.5.

1. STAR DANCER, 2. TRUMP STAR, 3. EXPLOSIVE

2. ARISTOCRAT PLATE (1,400m), Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II) – 2.15: 1. Best Buddy (9) Nakhat Singh 56, 2. Indian Glory (1) Mukesh Kumar 56, 3. Jean Lafette (4) Kuldeep Singh 56, 4. Salisbury (6) Suraj Narreddu 56, 5. Space Walk (2) B.R. Kumar 56, 6. Syc Ra (3) Surya Prakash 56, 7. Yesterday (11) R. Laxmikanth 56, 8. Allah Rakhi (4) Md. Ismail 54.5, 9. Ashwa Pushkin (13) Trevor 54.5, 10. Key To Time (8) Koushik 54.5, 11. Mehmoosh (5) P. Gaddam 54.5, 12. Muaser (12) P. Sai Kumar 54.5, 13. New Look (10) Kiran Naidu 54.5 and 14. Spectacular Cruise (7) Akshay Kumar 54.5.

1. ASHWA PUSHKIN, 2. SALISBURY, 3. SPECTACULAR CRUISE

3. DECCAN PRINCE PLATE (Div. I) (1,400m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 2.45: 1. British Empress (12) Akshay Kumar 60, 2. Dandy Man (10) Trevor 58, 3. Red Snapper (2) Kiran Naidu 55, 4. That's My Magic (1) Md. Ismail 55, 5. Beyond Limits (5) Gopal Singh 54.5, 6. Rhythm

Selection (3) P. Sai Kumar 54.5, 7. Zamora (8) Kuldeep Singh 54, 8. Mr. Shanghai (7) B.R. Kumar 53.5, 9. Loch Stella (9) C.P. Bopanna 53, 10. N R I Heights (4) Abhay Singh 53, 11. Cincia Azzurra (6) P. Gaddam 52, 12. Miss Marvellous (13) G. Nareish 51.5 and 13. Ulysses (11) Ajeeth Kumar 51.5.

1. DANDY MAN, 2. N R I HEIGHTS, 3. BRITISH EMPRESS

4. SUNNY BLOSSOM PLATE (1,200m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 3.15: 1. Gustly Look (11) Rohit Kumar 60.5, 2. Advance Guard (6) P. Sai Kumar 59, 3. Buttonwood (7) Koushik 58.5, 4. Saffron Art (1) Suraj Narreddu 57.5, 5. Francis Bacon (12) R. Laxmikanth 56.5, 6. Eagle Bluff (9) Akshay Kumar 55, 7. Aerial Combat (4) Santosh Raj N.R. 54.5, 8. N R I Touch (8) Abhay Singh 54, 9. Mt. Davidson (5) Kuldeep Singh 53, 10. Grand Finale (10) B.R. Kumar 52.5, 11. Lightning Fairy (14) Md. Ismail 52, 12. Melting Ice (2) Nakhat Singh 52, 13. Forever Bond (3) Ajeeth Kumar 51 and 14. Sun Dancer (13) Surya Prakash 50.

1. GUSTLY LOOK, 2. SAFFRON ART, 3. EAGLE BLUFF

5. GANGOTRI PLATE (Div. I) (1,400m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 3.45: 1. Linewiler (1) Deepak Singh 61, 2. Green Turf (4) Akshay Kumar 59, 3. Southern Princess (8) Trevor 57, 4. Whiskey Martini (14) Mukesh Kumar 56.5, 5. Certitude (9) Suraj Narreddu 56, 6. Hurricane (13) B.R. Kumar 55.5, 7. Classy Dame (12) Abhay Singh 55, 8. Thrill Of Power (10) Koushik 53.5, 9. O'Brien (6) Md. Ismail 53, 10. Sublime (7) Santosh Raj N.R. 53, 11. Shivalk Meadow (11) Ajeeth Kumar 52, 12. Air Salute (5) G. Nareish 51.5, 13. Lorena (3) R.S. Jodha 51.5 and 14. Felix Flame (2) P. Gaddam 50.

1. GREEN TURF, 2. WHISKEY MARTINI, 3. CERTITUDE

6. DECCAN PRINCE PLATE (Div. II) (1,400m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 4.15: 1. N R I Symbol (10) Deepak Singh 60, 2. Blazer (4) Kiran Naidu 57.5, 3. Balius (5) Abhay Singh 56.5, 4. Ayur Shakti (6) Ajeeth Kumar 54.5, 5. Max (12)

Root's distinction

■ Root's 218 is the highest by a visiting batsman at Chepauk, surpassing Dean Jones' 210 in the 1986 Tied Test

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND – 1ST INNINGS
Rory Burns c Pant b Ashwin 33 (60b, 2x4), Dom Sibley lbw b Bumrah 87 (286b, 12x4), Dan Lawrence lbw b Bumrah 0 (5b), Joe Root lbw b Nadeem 218 (377b, 19x4, 2x6), Ben Stokes c Pujara b Nadeem 82 (118b, 10x4, 3x6), Ollie Pope lbw b Ashwin 34 (89b, 3x4), Jos Buttler b Ishant 30 (51b, 5x4), Dom Bess (batting) 28 (84b, 5x4), Jofra Archer b Ishant 0 (1b), Jack Leach (batting) 6 (28b, 1x4); Extras (b-2, lb-16, nb-19): 37; Total (for eight wkts. in 180 overs): 555.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-63 (Burns, 23.5 overs), 2-63 (Lawrence, 25.4), 3-263 (Sibley, 89.3), 4-387 (Stokes, 126.1), 5-473 (Pope, 152.2), 6-477 (Root, 153.6), 7-525 (Buttler, 169.2), 8-525 (Archer, 169.3).

INDIA BOWLING

Ishant 27-7-52-2, Bumrah 31-4-81-2, Ashwin 50-5-132-2, Nadeem 44-4-167-2, Washington 26-2-98-0.

Mominul, Mehidy shine

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CHATTOGRAM

Captain Mominul Haque hit his 10th Test century and off-spinner Mehidy Hasan continued his good form for Bangladesh on the fourth day of the first Test against West Indies on Saturday.

Mominul's 115 – reaching the 3,000 runs milestone in the process – helped Bangladesh set a fearsome 395-run target for the West Indies.

'Ishant's wickets lifted the team'

S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

After another day of toil, left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem said that there were no demons in the pitch and backed India's batsmen to score heavily.

"The pitch has not undergone much change after the first two days," said Nadeem. There is just a bit of rough that can create problems for the left-handers. Other than that, the pitch is still quite good for batting. I am sure our batsmen will also score a huge total."

Explaining what the team tried to do on the second day, Nadeem said, "If you go for wickets, you can give away runs on this pitch. Our plan was to bowl in good areas. If the batsman plays a false shot, you have a chance to get a wicket."

The Jharkhand player also added that Ishant Sharma's wickets of Jos Buttler and Jofra Archer in the last session helped the morale of the team. "Ishant's wickets were crucial. When you get wickets like that, it uplifts the team," he said.

At the end of the day, the visitors had reached 110 for three, with debutants Kyle Mayers (37) and Krumah Bonner (15) at the crease. Mehidy Hasan claimed all the three wickets.

The scores: Bangladesh 430 & 223/8 decl. in 67.5 overs (Mominul Haque 115, Liton Das 69; Cornwall 3/81, Gabriel 3/37, Warrican 3/57) vs West Indies 259 & 110/3 in 40 overs (Kyle Mayers batting 37; Mehidy Hasan 3/52).

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

Two-time Grand Slam winner Garbine Muguruza crushed Marketa Vondrousova for the loss of just one game on Saturday to set up a Yarra Valley Classic final with World No. 1 Ashleigh Barty.

Last year's Australian Open finalist Muguruza smashed 20 winners and broke the 21st-ranked Vondrousova's serve five times en route to a 6-1, 6-0 win in 53 minutes. She has shown the form that put her atop the rankings in 2017, dropping just 10 games in four matches so far including her



Garbine Muguruza. •GETTY IMAGES

quarterfinal thrashing of Sofia Kenin – her conqueror in last year's Australian Open final.

The results: Yarra Valley Classic: Semifinal: Garbine Mugu-

ruza bt Marketa Vondrousova 6-1, 6-0.

Gippsland Trophy: Semifinals: Kaia Kanepi bt Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-3, 7-6(6); Elise Mertens w/o bt Naomi Osaka.

Grampians Trophy: Quarterfinals: Maria Sakkari bt Angelique Kerber 6-4, 6-2; Anett Kontaveit w/o Victoria Azarenka; Jennifer Brady bt Barbora Krejickova 7-6(5), 6-4; Ann Li bt Sorana Cirstea 6-3, 6-1.

ATP Murray River Open: Semifinals: Daniel Evans bt Jeremy Chardy 6-2, 6-2; Felix Auger-Aliassime bt Corentin Moutet 6-1, 6-2

Great Ocean Road Open: Semifinals: Stefano Travaglia bt Thiago Monteiro 6-3, 6-4; Jan-nik Sinner bt Karen Khachanov 7-6(4), 4-6, 7-6(4).

ATKMB coasts past Odisha



Manvir Singh. •SPORTZPICS/ISL

SPORTS BUREAU

ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) has often been criticised for not living up to its potential in front of goal and for being content with 1-0 wins. However, none of the flak the Mariners have been subjected to mattered on Saturday as they coasted to a thumping 4-1 win over Odisha FC in the Indian Super League at the GMC Stadium in Bambolim.

Manvir Singh and Roy Krishna were the architects of the victory as they struck a brace each to ensure ATKMB remained within three points of table-topper Mumbai City.

The result: Odisha FC 1 (Cole Alexander 45+2) lost to ATK Mohun Bagan 4 (Manvir Singh 11, 54, Roy Krishna 83-pen, 86).

Sunday's matches: Jamshedpur vs East Bengal, 5 p.m.; Hyderabad vs NEUFC, 7.30 p.m.